BRITISH DRAMA

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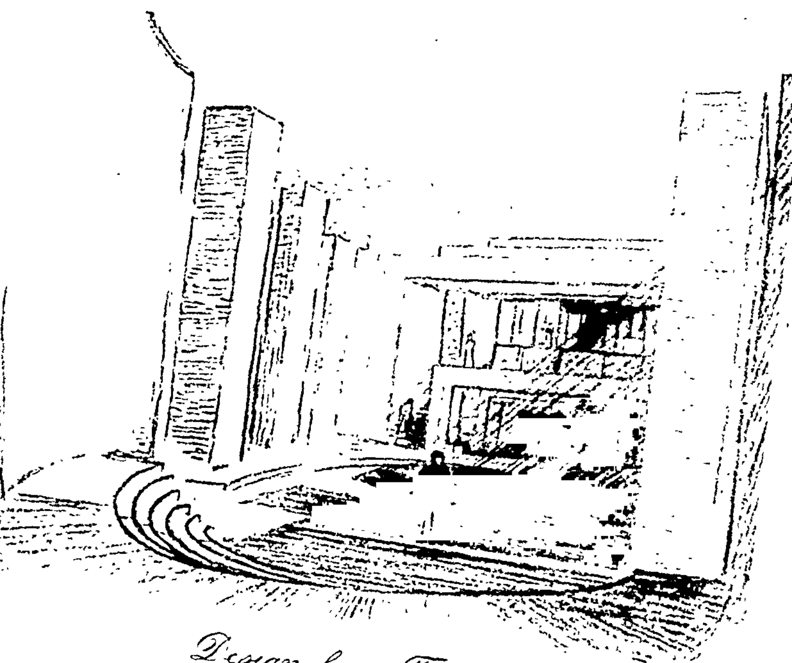
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Design for a Theatre
open to the air.. the sun and moon

BRITISH DRAMA

AN HISTORICAL SURVEY FROM THE BEGINNINGS TO THE PRESENT TIME

BY

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"THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE THEATRE"
"THE THEORY OF DRAMA"
"A HISTORY OF RESTORATION DRAMA" ETC.

THIRD EDITION REVISED

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

THIS book could not be, and is not intended to be, exhaustive. It attempts to trace the history of our theatre from its most primitive origins in the Middle Ages to the present day, and for this purpose it deals rather with tendencies than with individuals. Genius has constantly been forging new weapons for the theatre to wield, but in essence the theatre has remained one and the same. The tragic passion of Æschylus is the tragic passion of Shakespeare even as it is the tragic passion of Ibsen. The mirth of Euripides springs from the same fount as the mirth of Jonson or of Synge. All through the ages the terror and the awe and the laughter have been the same, minor variations only being made to accord with the spirit of changing generations This being so, my aim has been to deal with the main manifestations of our English theatre rather than to write a series of brief criticisms of particular writers and of their works. No apology is made for the inclusion or the exclusion of any individual dramas, save that I have endeavoured to take as examples those plays which seem to me most expressive of the tendencies here discussed. I am aware that there are many tragedies and many comedies, both Elizabethan and modern, which may appear to deserve greater attention than others to which I have devoted considerable space. On the other hand, it is often the lesser work which gives us the surest clues to the general tone of an age. Shakespeare's tragedies are not truly typical of the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods because of Shakespeare's greatness. If we would seek for those broader currents which flow silently and deeply from age to age we must search out Shakespeare's lesser companions and from their work divine the chief movements of which they form only a part.

As the drama can never be disconnected from the playhouse itself, each division of this brief survey is prefaced by a sketch of the theatres and the audiences of the period treated in the following pages. I have emphasized sufficiently here and elsewhere my belief that no true understanding of the drama of any age is possible without some formulated conception of the spectators for whom the particular plays were written and of the theatres in which they were intended to be produced. Regarding the drama as inseparable from the theatre, I have dealt but slightly with that remarkable activity in poetic playwriting which extended from 1795 to the end of the nineteenth century. Wordsworth, Shelley, Coleridge, and the rest were great poets, but for the most part they were poor dramatists, and even Byron declared that he wrote most of his dramas for the closet rather than the stage. They can claim, therefore, no more than scant attention in a work which is intended as an outline of English dramatic, and theatrically dramatic, literature.

In planning this work I have allowed full space to the modern dramatists, not only because the drama of our own day deserves our attention, but because of the belief that in the present-day theatre we have a revival of dramatic interest comparable only with that of the Elizabethan period. No age between the beginning of the seventeenth century and the end of the nineteenth century can show such a galaxy of great creative writers as our own age possesses. Tragedy and comedy alike have been revitalized, and we may look forward to a still fuller and even more artistic development of this newly awakened art in succeeding decades. To deal satisfactorily with living writers is always a difficult task, but I have attempted, as far as lay in my power, to test the works of to-day by the masterpieces of the past. It may be that there are some mistaken judgments, but so far as such a personal art as criticism can be objective I have endeavoured to make it so. The treatment of these modern dramatists is largely historical; an effort to estimate in wider terms the main creative forces in the theatre of to-day and to express some more

deeply held critical beliefs has been reserved for the final chapter, which sums up data presented earlier in the book.

It is my opinion that only through a wide survey can a true appreciation be gained of what the English theatre stands for. Only by watching its slow development in the Middle Ages, its flower-time which was Shakespeare, its decay in the Augustan period, its winter's sleep in the early nineteenth century, and its sending forth of new shoots in our times, can we realize the noble stock which it is our duty to tend and to nourish with our deepest care and attention. Art is international, the drama one of its chiefest modes of expression; yet the English theatre, besides being a heritage of humanity, is a national heritage which it behoves us to know and to add to, that it may not become merely a tradition of the past, but rather may embody a genuinely creative spirit in our midst.

I wish to express my sincerest gratitude and thanks to Mr Harold H. Child for the great help and for the many suggestions he has given me during the reading of the proofs of this volume. I have to thank also His Grace the Duke of Devonshire for permission to reproduce some copyright designs in his possession; the Librarian of Chatsworth for his courtesy in procuring this permission and for other assistance; Mr Bache Matthews and Mr Paul Shelving for allowing the reproduction of the latter's design for Kaiser's *Gas*; and Mr Huntley Carter for furnishing the original photograph of Meierhold's theatre. The Chatsworth designs are from photographs taken at the Victoria and Albert Museum. Mr Gordon Craig, besides many other courtesies and helpful aids, for which I am deeply grateful, has kindly given permission to use as the frontispiece his design for an open-air theatre from *The Theatre Advancing*, the photogravure plate being lent by Messrs Constable and Co., Ltd.

A. N.

June 1925

PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

IN preparing the present edition of this book I have entirely rewritten the final sections dealing with the development of English drama from the end of the nineteenth century to the present day. Dramatic affairs have moved rapidly during the past ten years, and, apart from the necessity of including notice of many plays produced or published since 1923, a fresh orientation toward the whole movement in the modern theatre seemed called for.

Maybe I have adopted here an over-optimistic attitude. In these days when our newspapers, with one auspicious and *one dropping eye, regularly announce to us the withdrawal* of plays after theatrical careers more brief than Gertrude's widowhood, when, too, the managers complain loudly of their inability to secure dramas worthy of representation, it might certainly be argued that we are on the verge of a decline similar to that experienced in seventeenth-century England after Shakespeare and his fellows sank into silence. Prognostication in literary matters is, of course, a difficult and a hazardous task, but I still feel that, in spite of the present critical state of the theatres, the English drama of to-day is manifesting a creative spirit which tells that the life-force of Edwardian days has not yet been suffocated. That our stage is timorous and unadventuresome cannot be denied, but sufficient remains to prove that we are not entirely content to rest on laurels won by our predecessors. Nor is this critical state of the theatre confined to England alone; on the Continent and in America there are kindred fears and kindred pessimism.

Commonly the cinema is blamed for the theatre's present parlous state, but, as I have striven to indicate, condemnation of the film seems to be but a suicidal process. The theatre is one of the greatest instruments of intellectual entertainment possessed by mankind; and now, within the

space of a few years, there has been developed a cognate art-form, closely associated with the stage and yet distinct from it—an art-form, too, which in a peculiarly effective manner reflects the existing conditions, desires, and aspirations of the present day. For the theatre to condemn uncritically this novel type of expression simply as a type of expression will be a procedure fatally unwise, and to declare that the cinema must always remain within a sphere of inartistic imbecility must betray only an ignorance of or an insensibility to what already has here been accomplished. An art-form that has produced the magnificently pathetic humour of Charlie Chaplin's *The Gold Rush* or the marvellously imaginative fancies of Walt Disney presents a force which in its positive achievement demands sympathetic appreciation and critical esteem. Mere imitation of those spectacular effects in which the film can revel is, however, equally fatal. Occasionally it may be good business; sometimes, as in Sir Oswald Stoll's production of Erik Charell's *Casanova* at the Coliseum, it will present something of rich and genuine beauty; but fundamentally it is effort misplaced. The film will always be able to beat the stage at this particular game.

The hope of future advance in the theatre, it seems to me, must come from a better-informed and more consciously critical appreciation of all that the new art of the cinema has introduced to our audiences. If the theatre is to live it must compete with the cinema, but compete not as the awkward clown in the circus with the professional strong man, but as the painter competes with the musician, the sculptor with the painter, each recognizing his special province and refusing to strain his legitimate means to secure ends alien to the spirit of his art. For this applies to both sides. So long as English film-producers unimaginatively endeavour to reproduce realistically the scenes of those stage-plays they avidly seize on for their ' talkies,' these producers would appear to be treading a path as absurd and as artistically barren as that essayed by theatrical managers who, to counter the claims of the cinema, trade merely in colourful show and spectacle. Recognition on the part of the one and of the other of the limitations imposed on them by their art-form and of

the demands made by that art-form—this is the supreme necessity.

For these reasons, and because there are indications that such a recognition is being approached, I have expressed myself in the later chapters of this book more optimistically than perhaps the existing facts would warrant. It may be that I am mistaken. It may be that the English dramatists, through their disinclination to experiment as boldly as others have done, are lagging, and will continue to lag, behind. It may be, even, that the novel art of the cinema will oust the old art of the stage. But, whatever the immediate future may bring, it must be a backward and unimaginative mind which insists, while clinging desperately to what is the familiar and the accustomed, on neglecting or on condemning consciously artistic efforts deliberately aimed at the evolution of new means of expression—means adequate to reveal the more complex and the more subtle conditions of a world grown strangely feverish and curious.

A. N.

June 1932

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ILLUSTRATIONS

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In the text of this book the titles of plays are quoted in the original form and spelling on first mention, and, with the exception of some early plays, are *thereafter modernized.* In the index all titles are modernized for ease of reference.

BRITISH DRAMA

PART I

FROM THE BEGINNINGS TO SHAKESPEARE

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY. THE DRAMA OF GREECE AND ROME

THE mimetic instinct is confined to no single nation; it is universal in its appeal, and reveals itself as one of the most primitive of human emotions. The desire of men and women to garb themselves in the semblance of attendants upon a god, even to take upon themselves the god-form in its august majesty; the desire to re-enact the sacred stories, whether they be of Grecian deities or of Jehovah and Christ; the later desire of the peasant to place himself, if but for a fleeting moment, in the position of a courtier, or of the courtier to forget for a time the intrigues and the cares of his state in a fondly imagined Arcady—all of these are but manifestations of the one primeval passion which reveals itself in church liturgy, in folk-mummings, and in masquerades, no less than in the tragedies of Æschylus and of Shakespeare. This universal nature of acting and of drama renders a study of the stage at once more fascinating and more difficult than the study of almost any other type of literature. It demands, in the first place, a careful investigation of religious ritual and of folk-customs, and, in the second, an equally careful investigation of the literatures of diverse races. No account of English drama can possibly be complete unless reference be made to the services of the early Church, to the relics of pagan ceremonials preserved in a

half-fossilized form among the peasantry, and to the development of dramatic art in Greece, in Rome, in France, in Spain, in Germany, and in the Scandinavian countries.

The fact that the passion for the drama is thus universal necessitates a further introductory remark. It makes the theatre one of the most traditional and, at the same time, most subtly symbolic of all literary media. There are far greater breaks to be found in the development of lyric and narrative poetry than there are to be discovered in the development of the drama. At the same time, drama continually advances to meet the needs of a particular age; and our task is, therefore, to trace at one and the same moment the relationship between the plays of one period and another, and to indicate the gradual lines of progression governing the whole world of the theatre. Thus, for example, the romantic tragi-comedy made popular in the early seventeenth century by Beaumont and Fletcher is, when examined closely, seen to be largely a development of the Shakespearian romantic comedy of the late sixteenth century. The one is bound intimately with the other; yet the spirit of *As You Like It* is removed, as by centuries, from the spirit of *A King and No King*. The one breathes to us the atmosphere of Elizabeth's Court, peopled with Drakes and Raleighs; the other tells of the vitiated tone of an enervated Cavalier society. The traditionalism and progressive nature of drama, this interrelation between the dramatic literatures of various races, this primitive emotion out of which all acting and 'feigning' spring, will, as far as is possible in the space of this volume, be kept duly in mind.

It is fitting, perhaps, that a start should be made with the drama of classical Greece and Rome, although, in all considerations of the history of English tragedy and comedy, it must be borne in mind that the medieval mysteries which later developed into the full florescence of Elizabethan drama were indigenous to the soil, that the direct influence of Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides is not visible till centuries had elapsed, and that even Seneca's tragedies did not come to take their place in the elaboration of the English drama till the sixteenth century. In Greece, as

in most lands, both comedy and tragedy took their rise from religious ceremonial. The wine-flushed devotees of Dionysus, arraying themselves in symbolic garments, led the way toward the satyric comedy; the more stately worshippers at the altars of majestic gods showed men the possibilities of tragic emotion. It is not easy, because of the lack of extant texts, to study the rise and progress of Greek comedy; but, happily, there are several masterpieces of the greater tragic dramatists which can convey to us both the grandeur of their efforts and the slow progressive movement which extends from the non-dramatic choral chants to the liberated dramas of Euripides. The course of Greek drama, as far as it is known, may briefly be outlined. From a common chant the ceremonial song developed into a primitive duologue between a leader, dressed probably in the robes of the god, and the chorus. The song became elaborated; it developed narrative elements, and soon reached a stage in which the duologue told in primitive wise some story of the deity. Further forward movements were introduced. Two leaders instead of one made their appearance. The chorus gradually sank into the background, no longer taking the place of a protagonist; it became, with Sophocles, merely an 'ideal spectator,' and then, with Euripides, simply a medium for the introduction of lyrical and musical passages often unrelated to the general action of the tragedy. Had there been any great successor to the three outstanding Greek dramatists tragedy must have inevitably taken on other forms. The chorus would have disappeared, and a more modern type of drama would have been evolved.

It is not necessary here to enter into the details of Greek dramatic activity, but a few notes on the main characteristics of that activity may be relevant, principally such as display the inherent differences between the Athenian stage and the modern.

In the first place, the plays were always regarded as part of a vast religious ceremonial. The audience was filled with a sense of the awe and majesty befitting the occasion, and, as a consequence, only a certain august tone could be

allowed in the development of action and of dialogue. plots, moreover, were, because of this, stereotyped. a very limited number of themes were permitted to dramatists, so that construction, characterization, and guage counted for far more than they could do in Elizabethan period, when a novel tale, an exciting epi: or an adventurous scene might hold children from play old men from the chimney-corner.

The playhouses were the vast amphitheatres of w shattered relics are still preserved on the outskirts of At and elsewhere. These tremendous circles of stone capable of seating thousands of spectators, the aristoc and the humbler citizens meeting together for the one pose of witnessing the tragedy enacted before them. consequence, the Greek drama is statuesque; it allow no violent movement; the dialogue is stately and maje rather than racy and free. The *cothurnus*, the megaph masks, the inevitable necessity for slow action, kept plays within bounds which never could confine the El bethans. At the same time, the heterogeneous audie composed of many classes and varieties of men, gave the Greek drama a certain tone which it shares with drama of Elizabethan times. There is a healthiness atmosphere, a breadth of passion, a universality of app alien to the more aristocratic and narrower playhouses the reigns of Charles I and of Charles II.

This drama of Greece proved the model for the Ron tragedy. Unfortunately, few specimens of Latin seri plays have come down to us. We have records of a num of writers famous in their day, but only the tragedies Seneca have been preserved in anything like a compl state. The Senecan dramas were unquestionably clo plays not intended for presentation in the theatre. Th show clearly the influence of Euripides, and show, mo over, the weakening of the tragic spirit. They are me dramatic, lacking in majesty of tone, immersed in horr and physical torments. They tell of an age less great, l manly, less noble than that of Periclean Athens. It is t Senecan drama, however, which exercised most influer

THE DRAMA OF GREECE AND ROME

upon the English, partly because of those very melodramatic elements, partly because Latin had been more treasured than Greek during the long era which we know as the Dark and Middle Ages. Alongside of Seneca we have the comedies of Terence and of Plautus, themselves far-off descendants of the satiric comedies of Aristophanes. Aristophanes himself had brought comedy to the height of perfection in Athenian times, but his plays, by reason of their local and topical touches, failed to find direct imitators elsewhere. The Aristophanic satiric type, on the other hand, developed naturally into the New Comedy of Greece, and it was this New Comedy which Terence and Plautus adapted or endeavoured to [illegible] were obviously written for a [illegible] They are witty, alert, cleverly [illegible] adth and they lack nobility. Because of their style they were never lost. All through [illegible] their place in monas[illegible] [illegible] gil, Terence takes his [illegible] of classical culture amid the surrounding grotesqueries of the Gothic imagination.

No better evidence could be found of Terence's influence in an age when drama seems completely dead than the plays of Hrotswitha, a tenth-century nun who wrote a series of dramas at Gandersheim in Saxony. "There are many Catholics," she says in her preface,[1]

> And we cannot entirely acquit ourselves of the charge, who attracted by the polished elegance of the style of pagan writers prefer their works to the holy Scriptures. There are others who although they are deeply attached to the sacred writings and have no liking for most pagan productions, make an exception in favour of the works of Terence, and, fascinated by the charm of the manner, risk being corrupted by the wickedness of the matter. Wherefore I, the strong voice of Gandersheim,[2] have not hesitated to imitate in my writings a poet whose works are so widely read

[1] The quotations [illegible]

[illegible] published at Nürnberg in 1501. The standard modern text is that give[n] by Charles [illegible]

[illegible] the Latin read[illegible]

Hrotswitha's plays are all on religious themes: *Gallicanus* treats of the chastity of Constance in the reign of the Emperor Constantine; *Dulcitius* of the martyrdom of Agape, Chionia, and Irena; *Callimachus* of the resurrection of Drusiana and Callimachus; *Paphnutius* of the conversion of Thais; *Abraham* of the repentance of Mary; *Sapientia* of the martyrdom of Faith, Hope, and Charity in the time of Hadrian. In tone they owe nothing to the Latin poet, although the comic figure of Dulcitius is well managed; but in style they display quite clearly that the profession of imitation in the preface was not without foundation.

There may have been other Latin dramas similar to those of Hrotswitha; but all record of them has perished. The further influence of Terence is not visible until we reach the age of humanism in the sixteenth century; but we must never forget that his works, for others besides Hrotswitha, were set apart from the rest of the relics of paganism, and that others risked infection from the matter for the sake of the manner.[1]

It is just possible that a further influence on the English and Continental drama came from Rome. During the age of decadence theatrical exhibitions in the Empire tended toward spectacle, buffoonery, and farce. The *histriones* descended from the heights to provide mere horseplay for the spectators. Crude as such efforts must have been, they were still largely mimetic in character, and it is hard to believe that even in the ages which succeeded the wild incursions of the Goths, the Huns, and the Vandals some sort of Roman histrionic forms was not preserved. There is, it is true, scarcely a record of such, but it is highly unlikely that any account of wandering *histriones* should have been set down for us in an age when parchment was kept for more serious affairs. A parallel instance may serve to make this clear. In 1642 the playhouses were closed by order of the Puritan authorities.

[1] The play called Χριστὸς πάσχων, which was attributed to St Gregory Nazianzene (fourth century), has lately been proved to be a tenth-century work (see the edition of J. G. Brambs, Leipzig, 1885). It displays interesting reminiscences of Greek drama.

They were not opened again until 1660. It was long thought that, with the exception of D'Avenant's operas, performed in 1656 and 1658, this period of eighteen years was an entire blank for the theatre. Minute investigation into the newspapers and documents of the time, however, is proving that audiences were fairly well catered for by itinerant actors, playing sometimes regular dramas, sometimes mere 'drolls' or farces. Taking into consideration the meagreness of our knowledge of medieval life, it does not seem to be an unreasonable suggestion that relics of Roman comedy were carried on by successive generations of minstrels, acrobats, and *jongleurs* up to the time when the mysteries and the miracles began to make their first appearance. Whatever truth may lie in this suggestion, however, the fact remains that of regular drama of any sort there was absolutely none during the period which intervened between the fall of the Roman Empire and the rise of the mysteries There may have been, among the country folk, reminiscences of ancient pagan ritual in the form of crude interludes such as have been preserved even down to the present day; but these remnants of the heathen beliefs of past times were fossilized and incapable of further creative progression.[1] Memories of Terence, relics of a debased and long-forgotten Roman farce, folk-plays of a rough and inartistic sort, may all have played their part in the development of early English drama; but this [illegible] ons made from those [illegible] of Greece, springing [illegible] itten for the people, [illegible]

[1] The question of the influence of 'folk drama' on the religious plays of the Middle Ages and on comedy of the sixteenth century is an important one; but because of its complexity it has been omitted here. The sword-dance with the various ritual performances at village festivals certainly contributed to the development of later drama. The scope of this influence is well outlined by H. H. Child in *The Cambridge History of English Literature*, vol. v, Chapter II, and has been exhaustively dealt with in Sir E. K. Chambers' *The Mediæval Stage*.

CHAPTER II

THE GROWTH OF NATIVE DRAMA

Tropes and Liturgical Plays

THE indigenous dramatic activity referred to in the preceding chapter took its rise, as did the drama of the Greeks, from the religion of the time. Whatever it borrowed from other sources it was in origin, and remained for long, distinctively a creation of the Church. The Church was everything for the Middle Ages. Corruption among the clergy may have been rife, but here, after all, was rest for the weary, solace for the afflicted, bread for the hungry, succour for the oppressed ; here was not only the church, but the school, the meeting-place, the centre of art and, still more important, of amusement. The religion of the Middle Ages was a broad religion. It was serious and mystical, but it allowed of laughter. Beside the real bishop stood the boy bishop with his riotous crowd of hilarious attendants. The Church was ready and eager to provide for the people all the delight as well as the spiritual uplifting which it could by means of art and letters. Moreover, it was ready to show to an uneducated folk the Scriptural story in visible wise, thus counteracting the lack of vernacular versions of the Holy Writ.

The very Mass itself is an effort in this direction. The whole of this service with its accompanying ritual is a symbolic representation of the most arresting episodes in the life of Christ, and it is but natural that the clergy should have attempted to make it even more outwardly symbolic as the knowledge of Latin among the ordinary people passed farther and farther into the background. More especially they must have seen the necessity, on the great feast-days of Christmas and of Easter, of bringing before the congregation the salient facts of the New Testament story.

Throughout the early centuries of the Catholic Church

gradual movements are to be discerned, all tending in the same direction. Their history has been traced by many scholars, and need not detain us here. Suffice it to notice that by the ninth cen[illegible] ecclesiastical music, [illegible] and that these trop[illegible] hence a dramatic form. Originally they were portions of the Mass service itself as elaborated for the celebration of Easter and other feasts. Of them all the most important is the so-called *Quem Quæritis*, a slight dramatization of the coming of the three Marys to the tomb of Christ.

> Quem quæritis in sepulchro, [o] Christicolæ?

chants one of the choir, personating the angel.

> Iesum Nazarenum crucifixum, o cælicolæ,

answer others, to which comes the reply:

> Non est hic, surrexit sicut prædixerat.
> Ite, nuntiate quia surrexit de sepulchro [1]

Very soon, as was indeed inevitable, these tropes became detached from the regular service; they were presented by themselves, and came to associate with themselves an accompanying dramatic ritual. The most instructive document concerning this development is that contained in the *Concordia Regularis*, a series of rules devised by Ethelwold, Bishop of Winchester, for the use of the Benedictines in the tenth century. It shows clearly that the drama as such had almost come into being. Ethelwold's instructions are as follows: [2]

> Dum tertia recitatur lectio, quatuor fratres induant se, quorum unus alba indutus ac si ad aliud agendum ingrediatur atque

[1] The text is quoted from Sir E. K. Chambers, *The Mediæval Stage*, ii, 9, who gives it from the St Gall MS 484, f. 11. The translation runs as follows:

> "Whom do you seek in the sepulchre, O Christians?"
> "Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified, O heavenly ones."
> "He is not here. He has risen even as He said before.
> Go; proclaim He has risen from the grave"

[2] The following translation is by Sir E. K. Chambers (*op. cit.*, ii, 14–15): "While the third lesson is being chanted, let four brethren vest themselves. Let one of these, vested in an alb, enter as though to take part in the

latenter sepulchri locum adeat, ibique manu tenens palmam quietus sedeat. Dumque tertium percelebratur responsorium residui tres succedant, omnes quidem cappis induti turribula cum incensu manibus gestantes ac pedetemptim ad similitudinem querentium quid veniant ante locum sepulchri. Aguntur enim hæc ad imitationem angeli sedentis in monumento atque mulierum cum aromatibus venientium ut unguerent corpus Ihesu. Cum ergo ille residens tres velut erraneos ac aliquid querentes viderit sibi adproximare incipiat mediocri voce dulcisono cantare *Quem quæritis*: quo decantato fine tenus respondeant hi tres uno ore *Ihesum Nazarenum*. Quibus ille, *Non est hic: surrexit sicut prædixerat. Ite nuntiate quia surrexit a mortuis.* Cuius iussionis voce vertant se illi tres ad chorum dicentes *Alleluia: resurrexit dominus.* Dicto hoc rursus ille residens velut revocans illos dicat antiphonam *Venite et videte locum*: hæc vero dicens surgat et erigat velum ostendatque eis locum cruce nudatum, sed tantum linteamina posita quibus crux involuta erat. Quo viso deponant turribula quæ gestaverunt in eodem sepulchro sumantque linteum et extendant contra clerum, ac veluti ostendentes quod surrexerit dominus, etiam non sit illo involutus, hanc canant antiphonam, *Surrexit dominus de sepulchro*, superponantque linteum altari. Finita antiphona Prior, congaudens pro triumpho regis nostri quod devicta morte surrexit, incipiat hymnum *Te Deum laudamus*: quo incepto una pulsantur omnia signa.

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service, and let him approach the sepulchre without attracting attention and sit there quietly with a palm in his hand. While the third respond is chanted, let the remaining three follow, and let them all, vested in copes, bearing in their hands thuribles with incense, and stepping delicately as those who seek something, approach the sepulchre. These things are done in imitation of the angel sitting in the monument, and the women with spices coming to anoint the body of Jesus. When therefore he who sits there beholds the three approach him like folk lost and seeking something, let him begin in a dulcet voice of medium pitch to sing *Quem quæritis*. And when he has sung it to the end, let the three reply in unison *Ihesum Nazarenum*. So he, *Non est hic* . . . At the word of this bidding let those three turn to the choir and say *Alleluia! resurrexit Dominus!* This said, let the one, still sitting there and as if recalling them, say the anthem *Venite et videte locum*. And saying this, let him rise and lift the veil, and show them the place bare of the Cross, but only the cloths laid there in which the Cross was wrapped. And when they have seen this, let them set down the thuribles which they bare in that same sepulchre, and take the cloth, and hold it up in the face of the clergy, and as if to demonstrate that the Lord has risen and is no longer wrapped therein, let them sing the anthem *Surrexit Dominus de sepulchro*, and lay the cloth upon the altar. When the anthem is done, let the Prior, sharing in their gladness at the triumph of our King, in that, having vanquished death, He rose again, begin the hymn *Te Deum laudamus*. And this begun, all the bells chime out together."

Thus was the drama born, not certainly as a distinctively English growth (for the same movement toward the elaboration of church ritual is to be traced in all the Catholic countries from the west of Europe to the east), yet at the same time in England as elsewhere a form of art springing fundamentally from the lives of the people. The various stages through which this primitive drama moved before it reached the stage of the miracle or mystery play would take too much space to detail here. Its history may be read in Sir E. K. Chambers' two fascinating volumes on *The Mediæval Stage.* The first step, naturally, was the gradual development of the dialogue and the action into little Latin playlets, a step marked by several extant manuscripts in France. The second was the introduction of the vernacular into the midst of the Latin verse. Here we have the invaluable testimony of the works of Hilarius, a scholar of Abelard and himself, it is said, an Englishman. His plays have no great intrinsic value, but they are of immense importance, because in some of them, as, for example, the *Suscitatio Lazari*, fragments of French verse intrude into the Latin text. The drama is slowly moving toward the people. The third step is the composition of purely vernacular plays acted still within the church. Of these only fragmentary examples of English workmanship have been preserved, although there are extant in French a *Sponsus*, telling the story of the wise and the foolish virgins, and a still more important *Adam*, which contains some exceedingly interesting stage directions. All of these were written apparently for performance within the church or cathedral, and the actors presumably were the monks, the priests, and the choir-boys in the service of the church.

It is obvious that, so long as the drama remained in these circumstances, little further progress could be hoped for. The subject-matter [illegible] and the treatment of that [illegible] by religious associa[illegible] the essential requirement was that the drama should become secularized.

(ii) The Mysteries and Miracle Plays

This secularization of the drama came into being fundamentally because of the circumstances of production. Lacking other means of amusing themselves, the medieval folk naturally crowded in to see these shows at Easter and Christmas; so that, within a short period, the churches were found to be quite inadequate for accommodating the tumultuous bands of men and women intent on witnessing the various plays. The obvious solution was to carry the performances outside into the spaces surrounding the church itself. This change of locality, added to the introduction of the vernacular, marked the clear break-away of the primitive drama from that of which it originally formed a part—the service of the Mass. Unquestionably the rulers of the Church saw the danger lying ahead of them, and they attempted in various ways to stem the tide, not realizing that the drama by this time had become a force with which even they could not contend. Instructions were issued forbidding the clergy to act in the churches; numerous complaints were voiced in the literary works of the time. The conscience of the superior orders was aroused, and Robert Mannyng in his *Handlyng Synne*, a free adaptation of the Anglo-Norman *Manuel des Pechiez*, was no doubt summarizing a good deal of contemporary opinion when he declared that

Hyt ys forbode hym, yn the decre,
Myracles for to make or se;
For myracles, ȝyf thou begynne,
Hyt ys a gaderyng, a syghte of synne.
He may yn þe cherche þurghe þys resun
Pley þe resurrecyun . . .
ȝuf þou do hyt in weyys or grenys,
A syghte of synne truly hyt semys.[1]

[1] "It is forbidden him by decree to make or witness miracle plays, because miracle plays, once they are begun, become gatherings and sights of sin. The clerk for this reason may act the Resurrection within the church . . . but if it be done on the roads or the village greens, verily it develops into a sight of sin." Both acting of plays by the clergy and the performance of sacred subjects outside the church were opposed at various times.

The result of this prohibition was distinctly not that which was desired; it merely threw the drama into the hands of those people among whom it was to flourish luxuriantly. The town guilds took over the representation of the plays and carried on the tradition to the sixteenth century.

The miracle plays, or mysteries,[1] which grew out of the early liturgical drama came to fruition in the fourteenth century. Their popularity was conditioned largely by the Corpus Christi festival decreed by Pope Urban IV in 1264 and made fully operative by the Council of Vienne in 1311. On this day, the Thursday after Trinity Sunday, those plays which before had remained heterogeneous and disconnected were bound together into more or less formal cycles dealing with the chief incidents in the Old and the New Testaments and hence revealing to the eager crowd *the whole story of the world from the creation of Adam to* the resurrection of Christ.

A true appreciation of these plays, or series of plays, can be obtained only when some attention has been paid to the audience and to the method of presentation. The Cornish plays may here be put aside, as the round amphitheatres of stone, relics of which are still to be seen in Cornwall, were purely exceptional; the great cycles of miracle plays now extant were certainly played in no such theatres. When the liturgical drama was still in close connexion with the church no doubt some raised platforms were employed to lift the actors above the throng surrounding them. With the elaboration of the cycles of plays such stationary platforms must have become rather cumbersome and inadequate for the performance of the various dramas, so that by the fourteenth century we find the normal 'theatre' is a pageant run on wheels and taken bodily to different 'stations' throughout the town. These pageants, as a contemporary informs us, were in the shape of "a highe place made like a howse with ij rowmes, beinge open on y^e tope: the lower rowme they apparelled and

[1] Technically there is a distinction between the two, miracles dealing with the lives of saints and mysteries with themes taken from the Bible The two titles, however, were practically synonymous in England.

dressed them selves ; and in the higher rowme they played ; and they stood vpon 6 wheeles." Sometimes these pageants were wheeled from place to place, sometimes the various plays were acted simultaneously so that time might be saved. Crude spectacular effects must have been aimed at : Noah's Ark was certainly in the likeness of a ship, and a dragon's mouth for Hell was there for every one to see. As a general rule, however, the plays must have been acted without scenery, or with scenery of a most crude kind. Costuming, on the other hand, even though it might be of a grotesque and primitive sort, was an important feature of the performances. One of the entries in the list of expenses at Canterbury was "a payer [1] of new gloves for Seynt Thomas," and at Chelmsford in Essex one John Wright was paid "for makynge a cotte [2] of lether for Christ." An inventory made in 1564 at the latter place included :

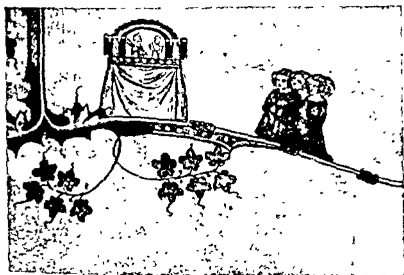
ij vyces coates, and ij scalpes, ij daggers (j dagger wanted).
v prophets cappes (one wantinge).
iij flappes for devils.
iiij shepehoks, iiij whyppes (but one gone).

From Coventry we learn that in 1544 "a new coat & a peir of hoes [3] for Gabriell" cost three shillings and fourpence, while at Hull in 1494 "three skins for Noah's coat, making it, and a rope to hang the ship in the kirk" amounted to seven shillings ; "a payr of new mytens to Noye" cost fourpence. In 1504 at Leicester "linen cloth for the angels heads, and Jesus hoose" cost in all just ninepence, and the painting of the angels' wings cost eightpence. At Norwich in 1565 an inventory of property belonging to the Grocers' Company was prepared. This included :

2 cotes & a payre hosen [4] for Eve, stayned.
A cote & hosen for Adam, Steyned.
A cote w^t [5] hosen & tayle for y^e serpente, steyned . . .
An Angell's Cote & over hoses of Apis Skynns.
A face & heare for y^e Father.
2 hearys for Adam & Eve.

[1] pair. [2] coat. [3] hose. [4] of hose. [5] with.





MEDIEVAL PAGEANTS

cynically on the worshippers are but another expression of this mood of abandon—a mood, however, which rarely becomes permanent. The gargoyles are but little outbursts of freakishness and gaiety in the midst of the mysterious grandeur of the vaulted nave and the solemn choir. For these people of the Middle Ages there was no such thing as form, as form is known in classic and in neo-classic art. With them drunkenness is found with the most mystic adoration, debauchery with the most lofty moral idealism, cynical ridicule with passionate worship, laughter with the solemnity of sacred thoughts.

It is natural that this grotesquerie should be reproduced in what is in some ways the most typical of medieval creations, the mystery or miracle play. The seriousness is there in all sooth in the figures of God and of His angels, in the terrible passion of Christ and in His resurrection from the dead, but there is also the laughter and the abandon, the escape from too high majesty. At one of the solemnest moments, as, for example, when the shepherds watch the star that was to herald the coming of a King over kings, this laughter breaks out, and we are treated to the fascinating little interlude of the thievish Mak and his companions. The general satire of women could not be stilled even in face of the worship of the Virgin Mary, and Noah's wife becomes a shrew, jeering at her husband and flouting him in a most disrespectful manner. Even the flaming terror of Satan was not exempt; rapidly he developed into a comic figure, roaring and lashing his tail, accompanied by a faithful Vice, who, with dagger of lath, as Shakespeare remembered, cried "Ah, ha!" in farcical wise. Herod, too, suffered in dignity. This slayer of infants, this murderer of murderers, developed into a comic type. His roaring and ranting became a recognized part of the performances of the time, and Shakespeare remembered him also in later days. Formless were the plays in which these characters appeared, lacking literary style often, and always wanting in correct artistic proportions—the work, as eighteenth-century critics would have said, of the "Gothick imagination."

these plays in detail. It may be sufficient to outline the scope of the best-preserved of the series, the York cycle, and, allowing for individual variations, to treat it as a type for all. This cycle, as has been indicated, contains forty-eight separate dramas, as well as a solitary fragment which was probably added toward the close of the fifteenth century. The whole series is now preserved in a manuscript in the British Museum (Add. MS. 35290). In it the various component parts are clearly apportioned to the various guilds, of which something will be said below. A list of the contents of the manuscript will facilitate discussion:

(1) Barkers. *The Creation, Fall of Lucifer.*
(2) Plasterers. *The Creation to the Fifth Day.*
(3) Cardmakers. *The Creation of Adam and Eve.*
(4) Fullers. *Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.*
(5) Coopers. *The Disobedience and Fall.*
(6) Armourers. *The Expulsion from Eden.*
(7) Glovers. *Cain and Abel.*
(8) Shipwrights. *The Building of the Ark.*
(9) Fishers and Mariners. *Noah and the Flood.*
(10) Parchminers and Bookbinders. *Abraham's Sacrifice.*
(11) Hosiers. *Israelites in Egypt, Ten Plagues and the Passage of the Red Sea.*
(12) Spicers. *The Annunciation.*
(13) Pewterers and Founders. *Joseph and Mary.*
(14) Tile-thatchers. *The Journey to Bethlehem.*
(15) Chandlers. *The Shepherds.*
(16) Masons. *The Coming of the Three Kings to Herod.*
(17) Goldsmiths. *The Adoration.*
(18) Marchals.[1] *The Flight into Egypt.*
(19) Girdlers and Nailers. *Massacre of the Innocents.*
(20) Spurriers and Lorimers.[2] *The Disputation in the Temple.*
(21) Barbers. *The Baptism of Christ.*
(22) Smiths. *The Temptation of Christ.*
(23) Couriours.[3] *The Transfiguration.*
(24) Capmakers. *The Woman taken in Adultery and the Raising of Lazarus.*
(25) Skinners. *Entry into Jerusalem.*
(26) Cutlers. *The Conspiracy.*
(27) Baxters.[4] *The Last Supper.*
(28) Cordwainers. *The Agony and Betrayal.*

[1] Men who shod horses.
[2] Makers of bits for horses.
[3] Curriers of leather.
[4] Bakers.

(29) Bowers [1] and Fletchers [2] *Peter's Denial and Christ before Caiaphas.*
(30) Tapiterers [3] and Couchers. *The Dream of Pilate's Wife and Christ before Pilate.*
(31) Lytsterers.[4] *The Trial before Herod.*
(32) Cooks and Waterleaders. *The Second Accusation before Pilate with the Remorse of Judas.*
(33) Tilemakers. *The Judgment on Christ.*
(34) Shearmen. *Calvary.*
(35) Pinners [5] and Painters *The Crucifixion.*
(36) Butchers. *The Mortification of Christ.*
(37) Sadlers. *The Harrowing of Hell.*
(38) Carpenters *The Resurrection.*
(39) Winedrawers. *Christ appears to Mary Magdalen.*
(40) Sledmen. *Travellers to Emmaus.*
(41) Hatmakers, Masons, and Labourers. *The Purification of Mary.*
(42) Scriveners. *The Incredulity of Thomas.*
(43) Tailors. *The Ascension.*
(44) Potters. *The Descent of the Holy Spirit.*
(45) Drapers *The Death of Mary.*
(46) Wefferes.[6] *The Appearance of our Lady to Thomas*
(47) Ostlers *The Assumption and Coronation of the Virgin.*
(48) Mercers. *The Judgment Day.*
(49) [fragment]. Innholders. *The Coronation of Our Lady.*

Such is the register of the plays in the British Museum manuscript, and it may be taken as fairly typical of the similar series of plays being performed all over Britain. The first point of interest about them is the close connexion of the plays with the trade guilds. It might be said, indeed, that without these trade guilds the regular cycles of mystery plays could never have come into being. The guilds provided the actors, and, what is more important, they provided the money for the pageants, the primitive 'scenery,' and the costumes. It will be noted how in many instances plays were given to guilds specially qualified to deal with them; thus the mariners took the Flood, and the goldsmiths the Adoration. Secondly, it will be observed that these plays cannot be judged critically on any standards such as are applicable to other dramas. Each play stands alone,

[1] Makers of bows.
[2] Those who feathered arrows.
[3] Makers of tapestry.
[4] Dyers.
[5] Makers of pins.
[6] Weavers.

yet all are but parts in a vast cycle which is a kind of *Divina Commedia* in the medieval sense of the term. Moreover, there could be nothing more futile than to attempt a general criticism of these works, or even of particular cycles, as one can criticize the plays of Marlowe or of Shakespeare. For the mystery plays have no author, or countless authors, put it in which way we will. The cycles were constantly changing. Unquestionably portions were added to or taken away from particular plays. The whole cycles are typically medieval in their almost complete anonymity. All we may do, therefore, is to indicate some of the chief points in one or two of the dramas or separate cycles, stressing chiefly those elements which might be held to offer hints to the regular dramatists of later years.

From the literary point of view the York cycle is possibly the least entertaining. Its high-water mark of excellence is to be found in the last few plays dealing with the Passion of Christ, but even here there is little that strikes us as great or even as possessing the potentialities of greatness. The value of this cycle is largely historic and linguistic. The Chester cycle presents, on the other hand, certain features of interest. This series may have been influenced slightly by the plays of York, and certainly something seems taken from the great French *Mystère du Vieil Testament*, but there is about these dramas a genuine devoutness of tone which appeals even to a modern reader. Not that the grotesque elements are wanting. They are displayed here clearly in the waterleaders' pageant of *The Deluge*, where Noah's wife appears in her traditional guise of a scolding shrew.

> *Noe.* Wife, come in ! why standes thou here ?
> thou art ever froward, that dare I sweare.
> Come in, on gods half ! tyme yt were,
> for feare lest that we drowne.
> *uxor Noe.*[1] Yea, Sir, set vp your sayle
> and rowe forth with evill heale [2] !
> for, without any fayle,
> I will not out of this towne.
> But [3] I haue my gossips everichon,[4]
> one foote further I will not gone

[1] Noah's wife. [2] health. [3] unless. [4] every one.

they shall not drowne, by St John,
and [1] I may save their lyfe.
they loved me full well, by christ;
but thou wilt let them in thy chist,[2]
els rowe forth, Noe, whether thou list,
and get thee a new wife.
Noe. Sem, sonne, loe, thy mother is wraw.[3]
for sooth such another I do not know.
Sem Father, I shall fett [4] her in, I trow,
without any fayle.
Mother, my father after thee send,
And bydds the into yonder ship wend
loke vp and se the wynde,
for we be readye to sayle.
vxor Noe. Sonne, goe again to him and say:
I will not come therein to daye.
Noe. Come in wife, in 20 devills waye,
Or else stand there without. . . .
vxor Noe. That will I not for all your call,
but I haue my gossopes all.
Sem. In faith, mother, yet you shall,
whether you will or not. [*tunc ibit.*[5]
Noe Welcome, wife, into this boate.
vxor Noe. And haue thou that for thy mote[6]
[*Et dat alapam vita*[7]
Noe. A! ha! mary, this is hote,[8]
it is good to be still.

Whatever jollification may appear in scenes such as this, it is, however, the emotion appearing in these Chester plays that calls for most attention. It is nowhere better expressed than in the play of *Abraham's Sacrifice*, performed by the Barbers and the Wax-chandlers. The portraits of Abraham and Isaac are well drawn, and there is a perfect charm in the childlike presentation of this heart-touching story.

Abraham. Make thee ready, my Derling,
for we must doe a lyttle thing.
this wood vpon thy back thou bring,
we must not long abyde. . . .

---

[1] if. [2] chest, or Ark. [3] angry. [4] fetch.
[5] Here she is forced into the Ark. [6] speech or argument.
[7] She gives him a slap (*vita* probably = *victa*, 'being conquered').
[8] hot.

Isaak. Father, I am all readye
to doe your bydding mekelie,
to bear this wood full bowne[1] am I,
as you commaunde me.
Abraham. O Isaak, Isaak, my derling deere,
my blessing now I geve the[2] here.
take vp this fagot with good cheare,
and on thy backe yt bringe,
and fire with me I will take.
Isaake. Your bydding I will not forsake,
father, I will never slake
to fulfill your bydding.
[*Tunc Isaak accipiet lignum super tergum et ad montem pariter Ibunt.*[3]
Abraham. Now Isaake, sonne, goe we our waye
to yonder mountayne, if that we maye
Isaake. My dere father, I will assaye
to follow you full fayne.
Abraham. O! my hart will break in three,
to heare thy wordes I have pyttie.
as thou wilt, lord, so must yt be:
to thee I will be bayne.[4]
lay downe thy fagot, my owne sonne deere!
Isaak. All ready, father, loe yt is here.
but why mak you so heavie cheare?[5]
are you any thing adred[6]?
father, if it be your will,
wher is the beast that we shall kill?
Abraham. Ther is non, sonne, vpon this hill
that I see here in this steed.[7] . . .
Isaak. Father, tell me of this case,
why you your sword drawen hase,
and beare yt naked in this place;
thereof I have great wonder.
Abraham. Isaac, sonne, peace! I pray thee,
thou breakes my harte even in three.
Isaac. I praye you, father, leane[8] nothing from me,
but tell me what you thinke.
Abraham. O Isaac, Isaac, I must thee kill.
Isaac. Alas! father, is that your will,
your owne childe here for to spill,[9]
vpon this hilles brynke? . . .

---

[1] ready. [2] thee.
[3] Here Isaac takes up the wood on his back, and both go off to the hill.
[4] obedient. [5] Why are you so heavy of heart?
[6] afraid. [7] place. [8] keep. [9] destroy.

Abraham. O my sonne, I am sory
to doe to thie this great anye[1]:
Gods Comaundment do must I,
his workes are ay full mylde.
Isaac. Wold God, my mother were here with me!
she wolde knele vpon her knee,
praying you, father, if it might be,
for to save my life.
Abraham. O Comelie Creature, but[2] I thee kill,
I greeve my God, and that full Ill:
I may not worke against his will
but ever obedyent be,
O Isaac, Sonne, to thee I saye:
God has Comaunded me this daye
sacrifice—this is no naye[3]—
to make of thy boddye.[4]
Isaac. Is it Gods will I shold be slaine?
Abraham. yea, sonne, it is not for to layne[5];
to his bydding I will be bayne,
ever to his pleasinge. . . .
Isaac. Mary! father, God forbydd
but you doe your offringe.
Father, at home your sonnes you shall finde
that you must love by course of kinde.[6]
be I once out of your mynde,
your sorrow may sone[7] cease,
But you must doe Gods bydding.
father, tell my mother for nothing.

It is easy to see here the emotional power, even if expressed in crude phraseology, which was later to give inspiration to more artistic and more cultured dramatists.

Clear marks of composite authorship are afforded in the so-called "Towneley" cycle, which probably belongs to the town of Wakefield. Some of the plays are evidently taken over from the York series or belong to some common source; others are independent, but of small literary value; and a few (plays iii, xii, xiii, xiv, and xxi) are characterized by a humour freer and bolder than anything visible in the other mystery cycles. Indeed, in those five plays we have the first sure signs of the hand of a writer possessing independent thought and individual expression. The five

[1] annoy (= harm). [2] unless. [3] there is no denying [4] body. [5] to be denied. [6] nature. [7] soon.

plays deal with Noah, the Shepherds, the Adoration, and the last days of Christ. Of these unquestionably that which possesses most interest is the so-called *Secunda Pastorum* (Nos. xii and xiii are both shepherds' plays), in which occurs the delightful native pastoral of Mak and his companions. The shepherds are shown chatting "in rustic row"; Mak enters to them, and, when they lie down to sleep, he succeeds in stealing a lamb. His companions awake, and find their loss. Together they troop down to Mak's cottage and knock at the door. Mak lets them in, and they see a cradle (in which the sheep is wrapped up). The third shepherd wishes to see the supposed child:

Gyf me lefe [1] hym to kys and lyft vp the clowtt.[2]
what the dewill is this? he has a long snowte.
primus pastor. he is merkyd [3] amys. we wate ill abowte.
ijus pastor. Ill spon [4] weft, Iwys [5] ay commys foull owte.[6]
Ay, so!
he is lyke to oure shepe!
iijus pastor. how, gyb! may I pepe?
primus pastor. I trow, kynde [7] will crepe
where it may not go. . . .
Mak. Peasse [8] bid I: what! lett be youre fare;
I am he that hym gatt and yond woman hym bare.
primus pastor. What dewill shall he hatt [9]? Mak? lo god! Makys ayre.[10]
ijus pastor. lett be all that. now god gyf hym care, I sagh.[11]
Vxor. A pratty child is he
As syttys on a woman's kne;
A dyllydowne, perde,
To gar [12] a man laghe.
iijus pastor. I know hym by the eere marke that is a good tokyn.
Mak. I tell you, surs, hark! hys noyse [13] was brokyn.
Sythen told me a clerk that he was forspokyn.[14] . . .
Vxor. he was takyn with an elfe,
I saw it myself.
when the clock stroke twelf
was he forshapyn.[15]
ijus pastor. ye two ar well feft sam in a stede.[16]

---

[1] leave. [2] cloth. [3] marked. [4] spun. [5] truly. [6] out. [7] nature. [8] peace. [9] be called. [10] Mak's heir. [11] say. [12] make. [13] nose. [14] bewitched. [15] misshaped. [16] Literally, endowed together in one place, *i.e.*, both in the plot.

iijus pastor. Syn thay manteyn thare theft let do thaym to dede [1]
Mak. If I trespas eft gyrd of my heede.[2]
with you will I be left.[3]
primus pastor. Syrs, do my reede.[4]
ffor this trespas,
we will nawther ban [5] ne flyte.[6]
ffyght nor chyte,[7]
Bot haue done as tyte,[8]
And cast hym in canvas [9]

This scene, because of its vivacity and realism, has become well known, but it is typical of many other scenes in which a crude kind of native comedy may be seen struggling to birth. Thus in the most terrible scene of the *Crucifixion* humour is introduced in the persons of four torturers. They work away at the cross, and start hauling it to its place:

Tercius tortor. So, that is well, it will not brest,[10]
But let us se who dos the best
with any slegthe of hande
iiijus tortor. Go we now vnto the othere ende:
ffelowse, fest [11] on fast youre hende,[12]
And pull well at this band.
primus tortor. I red,[13] felowse, by this wedyr,[14]
That we draw all ons togedir,[15]
And loke how it wyll fare.
ijus tortor. let now se and lefe [16] youre dyn!
And draw we ilka syn from syn [17],
ffor nothyng let vs spare
iijus tortor. Nay, felowse, this is no gam [18]!
we will no langere draw all same [19]

Som can twyk,[22] who so it is,
Sekys easse on some kyn syde [23]
primus tortor. It is better, as I hope,
On by his self [24] to draw this rope,

[1] do them to death [2] head. [3] I will agree with your judgment.
[4] act according to my counsel. [5] curse. [6] quarrel. [7] chide.
[8] quickly. [9] toss him in a blanket. [10] burst. [11] fasten.
[12] hands [13] counsel. [14] weather. [15] together. [16] leave
[17] sinew from sinew. [18] game. [19] together. [20] much.
[21] may have. [22] pull slightly. [23] on some side or another.
[24] each by himself.

And then may we se
who it is that ere while
All his felows can begyle,
Of this companye.
Secundus tortor. Sen[1] thou will so haue, here for me!
now draw I, as myght thou the[2]?
Tercius tortor. Thou drew right wele.[3]
haue here for me half a foyte[4]!
quartus tortor. wema,[5] man! I trow thou doyte!
Thou flyt[6] it neuer a dele[7];
Bot haue for me here that I may!
primus tortor. Well drawen, son, bi this day!
Thou gose well to thi warke!
Secundus tortor. yit efte,[8] whils thy hande is in,
pull therat with some kyn gyn.[9]
iijus tortor. yee, & bryng it to the marke.
quartus tortor. pull, pull!
primus tortor. haue now!
ijus tortor. let se!
iijus tortor. A ha!
iiijus tortor. yit a draght[10]!
primus tortor. Therto with all my maght[11]
ijus tortor. A ha! hold still thore[12]!
iijus tortor. So, felowse! looke now belyfe,
which of you can best dryfe,
And I shall take the bore.[13]

The other stray examples of mysteries need not detain us much further, although the *Ludus Coventriæ*, if only for its peculiar character as an unattached cycle and for its fanciful theology, deserves close attention. This series of forty-two plays has nothing to do with the regular Coventry Corpus Christi cycle, of which all but a fragment has perished, and which was most probably performed at more than one town. Apart from these major series the most interesting relics we possess are the actors' parts for three little playlets of an exceedingly primitive type. These actors' parts were discovered at Shrewsbury in 1890 and show clearly how the Latin anthems at Christmas and Easter were gradually

[1] since. [2] thrive. [3] well. [4] foot. [5] alas! [6] move. [7] bit. [8] yet once again.
[9] with some kind of cunning ('gin' means either 'engine'—tool, lever, etc.—or 'artifice').
[10] yet another pull. [11] might. [12] there.
[13] hole (with reference to the hole in which the Cross is to stand).

adorned with fragments of dialogue in the vernacular. The *Officium Pastorum* gives us the basis of the later shepherds' plays, the *Officium Resurrectionis* the elaboration of the *Quem Quæritis* trope, and the *Officium Peregrinorum* the first stage of development in the ever-popular story of Christ's reappearance before his disciples. The majority of the other extant mysteries and miracles have less intrinsic value. The Newcastle Shipwrights' play is in the ordinary tradition; the *Abraham and Isaac* probably belonging to Northampton is interesting for its association with the French *Mystère du Vieil Testament*; and the "Digby" plays of *The Conversion of St Paul, St Mary Magdalene,* and *The Massacre of the Innocents* show evidence of a capable authorship. None, however, deserves detailed mention here. Two points of historical importance might, on the other hand, be noted in the Norwich play of *The Fall* and in the *Croxton Sacrament.* In the second version of the former there are introduced the figures of Dolor, Myserye, and the Holy Ghost, showing that the original mystery tradition was widening itself to include characters not in the sacred text, and was approaching the allegorical types of the moralities. In the latter, which dates from the second half of the fifteenth century, there is a note that "ix may play yt at ease," a sign possibly that the original guild actors were giving way to professional players, who were touring the country and presenting the pieces originally associated with amateur performances.

What, it may be asked in conclusion, is to be our final judgment on this mystery tradition so far as it concerns the development of dramatic art? Obviously there are many defects in the plays. They are chaotic in construction, the cycles forbidding the more ordered expression of individual thoughts and feelings. Conservatism, moreover, rules these dramas. The stories and the types were already there before the authors when they sat down to write. Hardly any scope was offered to the dramatist who might have superabundant dramatic inventiveness. The stiltedness of the language affects us also; clearly the writers are fettered by the various rimes and measures in which the

dialogue is cast. On the other hand, we see many possibilities for future advance. The mysteries gave to the people of England a taste for theatrical shows; they prepared the ground for the Elizabethan drama of later date; they provided the basis for further development along artistic lines. There was little here that was artificial and imitative. In origin the English mysteries may have borrowed much from the French plays of a similar type, but fundamentally they breathed of English soil. The anachronisms permitted by the lax standards of medieval art, moreover, allowed a freshness and vitality of treatment which would have been impossible under different conditions. Cain becomes an English peasant of grasping and rapacious mood; the shepherds in the *Secunda Pastorum* are not the shepherds of Palestine, but the shepherds of an English countryside; Noah's wife is a "cursed shrew" of some provincial town. The serious scenes, too, have frequently this realistic flavour. The murderers who surround Christ in the Wakefield play of *The Crucifixion* are native types and owe nothing to their historical surroundings. It is the freshness, then, of the mystery plays which deserves our attention, for it was this freshness added to a sense of form borrowed from a study of classical art which gave to us the glories of the Shakespearian drama.

CHAPTER III

THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROFESSIONAL DRAMA

The Morality Plays

THE exact steps in the advance from miracle play to morality are exceedingly difficult to trace, although a hint of the process is provided in the Norwich play, *The Fall*, noted in the last chapter. All we can say is that some century and a half after the miracles had first become an established form the morality play makes its definite appearance. These morality plays differ entirely from the other type. In the first place, they are all much longer than any of the component parts of a mystery cycle, and some are divided after the manner of the Senecan tragedies into acts and scenes. Nor were they written for precisely the same audience. Many were clearly penned for production in the halls of persons more aristocratic than those who witnessed the mysteries, and the majority, if not all, of them must have been performed by professional actors. The notes on the title-pages of *Impacyente pouerte* that "Foure men may well and easelye playe thys Interlude," and of *Welth and Helth* that "Foure may easely play this Playe" point almost certainly to the small band of strolling players. Here, too, we find for the first time clear indications of individual authorship. Wrapped as the moralities may be in medieval abstractions, with them the drama begins to move into the light of the modern age. On many of them renascent humanism has set its seal.

The moralities are all characterized by the use of abstractions and of allegorical characters as the *dramatis personæ*. At first sight this might appear to be a retrogression from the real, or supposedly real, figures of the mystery plays, but the retrogression is more apparent than actual. Constantly the allegory as such is breaking down, and contemporary traits are given to the Deadly Sins and

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In Henry Medwall's *goodly interlude of Nature* (end of fifteenth century) Man is addressed by Nature, while Bodily Lust, Sensuality, and Worldly Affection strive to draw him away from Reason. Moral in aim, too, is *Johan the Euangelyst*, where Evil Counsel and Idleness play the wicked parts. The contemporary features of the former have already been commented upon. *A Newe Interlude of Impacyente pouerte* (printed 1560) is of a similar cast. Envy, Collhassarde, and Mysrule play the vagabond crew, and are opposed by Peace and Pouerte. Here once more the realism of the presentation of the *dramatis personæ* attracts our notice. This realism is further increased in *An enterlude of Welth, and Helth, very mery and full of Pastyme* (early sixteenth century), in which Welth and Shrowdwyt are as full of vitality as any character in regular sixteenth-century farce. Dialect is here introduced by Hance Beerpot, and Ill Wyll in some scenes pretends he is Spanish and speaks a kind of mixed language with English and Spanish forms. In this play we are close to the comic interlude proper. *The Pride of Life* (early fifteenth century) is nearer to the mystery tradition with its characters Rex Vivus, Primus Miles Fortitudo, and Secundus Miles Sanitas, but in the Nuntius Mirth it draws close to the realism of the others. *Mind, Will and Understanding* has a slightly variant theme in the presentation of Anima with her three parts, Mind, Will, and Understanding, seduced by Lucifer and reconverted by Everlasting Wisdom. A struggle for the soul of Humanum Genus is once more to be found in *The Castell of Perseverance* (early fifteenth century), one of the earliest-known moralities. A Malus Angelus with the Seven Deadly Sins and a Bonus Angelus with the Six Divine Graces are the chief contending forces. Of slightly different features are the *propre newe Interlude of the Worlde and the Chylde, otherwyse called Mundus & Infans* (printed 1522) and John Skelton's better-known *Magnyfycence, a goodly interlude, and a mery* (printed 1529–33). The latter is particularly interesting as showing the influence of humanistic thought upon this form of drama, the didactic aim being not so much moral as calculated to convey a

truth emphasized by many classic philosophers—the folly of expending money lavishly and trusting all to friends who may prove false. Even *Magnyfycence*, however, skilfully as that is written, is of minor importance when it is set beside Sir David Lyndsay's work in the Scottish dialect, *Ane Satyre of the thrie Estaits, in commendation of vertew and vituperation of vyce* (c. 1540). This is a much more ambitious work than any of the pieces we have considered above. It takes the form of a disputation surrounding Rex Humanitas between Diligence and Wantonnes, which gives place to an "Interlude" introducing as its chief character "Pauper, the pure Man." Through the last named Lyndsay proceeds to satirize the corruptions of Church and of State, his bitter style showing clearly his own feelings and thoughts. Thus Pauper proceeds to give an account of his position:

Gude-man, will ȝe gif me ȝour Charitie,
And I sall declair ȝow the black veritie
My father was ane auld man, and ane hoir,[1]
And was of age fourscoir of ȝeirs[2] and moir[3],
And Mald, my mother, was fourscoir and fyfteine;
And with my labour I did thame baith susteine,
Wee had ane Meir,[4] that caryit salt and coill;[5]
And everie ilk[6] ȝeir scho[7] brocht vs hame ane foill.[8]
Wee had thrie ky,[9] that was baith fat and fair,—
Nane tydier into the toun of Air[10]
My father was sa waik[11] of blude and bane,[12]
That he deit[13]; quhairfoir my mother maid great
maine.[14]
Then scho deit, within ane day or two;
And thair began my povertie and wo.
Our gude gray Meir was baittand[15] on the feild;
And our Lands laird tuik hir for his hyreild[16]
The Vickar tuik the best Cow be[17] the head,
Incontinent, quhen[18] my father was deid;

---

[1] hoar (= white). [2] years. [3] more. [4] mare.
[5] which carried salt and coal. [6] each. [7] she. [8] foal.
[9] kine. [10] Ayr. [11] weak. [12] bone [13] died.
[14] wherefore my mother made great lament (moan)
[15] battened.
[16] took her for his rent or heriot (by which a lord claims the best animal on the death of a tenant). [17] by. [18] when

And, quhen the Vickar hard tel how that my mother
Was dead, free-hand he tuke to him ane vther.[1]
Then Meg, my wife, did murne, both evin & morow,
Till, at the last, scho deit for verie sorow.
And, quhen the Vickar hard tell my wyfe was dead,
The thrid Cow he cleikit be the head.[2]
Thair vmest clayis,[3] that was of rapploch [4] gray,
The Vickar gart [5] his Clark bare them away.
Quhen all was gaine, I micht mak na debeat,[6]
Bot, with my bairns, past for till beg my meat.[7]
Now haue I tald ȝow the blak veritie,
How I am brocht into this miserie.

Diligence, to whom he tells this tale, is surprised and questions him:

How did ȝe person [8]? Was he not thy gude freind?

to which Pauper at once makes reply:

The devil stick him! He curst me for my teind,[9]
And halds me ȝit [10] vnder that same proces,
That gart me want the Sacrament at Pasche.[11]
In gude faith, sir, thocht he wald cut my throt,
I haue na geir [12] except ane Inglis grot,[13]
Quhilk I purpois to gif ane man of law.[14]

The answer of Diligence is straight and to the point:

Thou art the daftest fuill [15] that ever I saw.
Trows thou, man, be the law to get remeid
Of men of kirk? [16] Na, nocht till thou be deid.[17]

Lyndsay's satire, with its biting realistic touches, is far in advance of any of the English moralities.

Very soon the morality as such passed into the service of other parties than that of the moral teachers. Already we can trace a political element in Lyndsay's work, and this is intensified in *Respublica* (1553), a well-written drama

[1] immediately he took another. [2] caught by the head.
[3] last clothes. [4] a kind of tweed. [5] ordered, caused.
[6] I could make no reply (do nothing).
[7] went away to beg for food. [8] parson.
[9] He excommunicated me for my tithes (*i.e.*, for not paying them).
[10] holds me yet. [11] which makes me go without Communion at Easter.
[12] property. [13] English groat.
[14] which I intend to give a lawyer. [15] maddest fool.
[16] Do you expect to get remedy from the clergy by means of the law?
[17] No, not till you're dead.

directed against the reformers. The scenes of the People here are excellently conducted. So too in *Wyt and Science* (1541–8) we find the morality being used in the cause of humanism against the forces of Ignorancy and Idleness, who both appear among the *dramatis personæ*. In every way during the sixteenth century the scope of this form was being widened, so that it merged readily into the interlude proper.

One need devote no special comment to the fact that any account of the morality plays or of the mystery plays must necessarily be disproportioned Many of the dramas written during those centuries must have perished irretrievably, although there is always hope that new examples will be discovered. It was only in 1906 that, in an Irish country mansion, three important moralities, otherwise unknown, suddenly came to light. Some fragments of a play called *The Cruel Debtor* (c. 1566), by one Wager, were unearthed recently in the British Museum, and in 1923 these were added to by the chance discovery of another leaf of the play[1] Moreover, one of the most important links in the development of the drama, the *godely interlude of Fulgens Cenatoure of Rome [and] Lucres his doughter*, turned up unexpectedly at the Mostyn sale of 1919. It may well be understood, therefore, that our knowledge of the drama of this period rests only upon a few scattered items of evidence which time has carelessly handed down to us. From what remains we can but hazard a few generalizations which may come more or less close to the truth. The morality play marks no retrogressive movement. In it there are suggested many possibilities of future development both in tragedy and in comedy; many of the characters presented, even though their names may be allegorical, have a vitality lacking in later dramas intended to be realistic. The profound devotion of the authors gave to their plays a deep seriousness of tone, and their inherent sense of humour provided comic scenes of a truly excellent cast. In several particular ways, too, these authors of the moralities handed on

[1] See Malone Society *Collections*, i, 4 and 5, and ii, 2.

traditions later to be transformed in the Elizabethan period. Of these traditions, that of the Vice may be taken as typical. The Vice has already been found in the mystery plays; he becomes an established figure in the morality. His sense of fun, his rascality, his quips, and his jests made him a stock figure, and it is no mere fancy that finds him under the guise of Feste and Touchstone at the close of the sixteenth century.

(ii) From Symbolism to Realism. The Interludes and Court Plays

In passing from the morality proper to the interlude, the same warning concerning the scantiness of the texts preserved must once more be given. It is even more certain here that countless plays have perished. A glance at Professor Feuillerat's volumes of records from the Revels' accounts will display clearly the loss of these early dramas. Of many plays mentioned there only an infinitesimal portion has come down to us. Again, therefore, any account of this dramatic development must be regarded as tentative rather than final in character.

The word ' interlude ' seems to have had, and still to have, no very definite meaning. It may imply simply a ' play ' in the sense that it is a *ludus* carried on between (*inter*) several characters;[1] but the use of the term in Lyndsay's *Ane Satyre of the thrie Estaits* would seem to show that the alternative significance, that of a play in the midst of other festivities or business, was in the minds of many early writers. Unless we confine the term strictly to those plays of a realistic sort (as, for example, Heywood's) we can find no strict line of demarcation between it and the term ' morality.' As has been noted, many of the moralities proper were styled by their printers or authors ' interludes,' and even the characteristics of the two forms merge into one another. Thus *Hyckescorner* (early sixteenth century) is in the main a morality, yet shows a clear development toward the greater elaboration of purely comic elements; so

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too do *Thiterlude of Youth* (reign of Mary), *A new Enterlude called Thersytes* (c. 1537), and John Rastell's *A new Interlude and a mery of the nature of the .iiii. elements.*

It is with Rastell and those who were associated with him—Medwall, Sir Thomas More, and John Heywood—that we begin clearly to move into a new realm.[1] Here, for the first time, we meet with the introduction of purely secular characteristics. The group of plays concerned in this new movement includes Medwall's newly discovered *Fulgens and Lucres* and the kindred *Calisto and Melebea* (printed by Rastell) translated by an anonymous writer from an Italian version of the Spanish *Celestina* (1492). Besides these there are Heywood's *A dialogue concerning witty and witless*, *A play of loue* (printed 1534), and *The Play of the wether* (printed 1533), with the trilogy of interludes attributed to Heywood—*The playe called the foure P.P.* (printed 1543–7), *A mery Play betwene the pardoner and the frere, the curate and neybour Pratte* (c. 1513–21; printed 1533), and *A mery play Betwene Johan Johan the husbande, Tyb his wyfe & syr Ihān the preest* (printed 1533). To the above may also be added *Of Gentylnes and Nobylyte. A dyaloge . . compilid in maner of an enterlude* (printed by Rastell), attributed, on what appears to be sure evidence, to Rastell by Dr A. W. Reed. Three clearly defined strata are revealed in this group of plays: a primitive *débat* kind of drama, exemplified in Heywood's three known plays; a coarse but hearty farce form shown in *The foure P.P.* and the two accompanying dramas; and a romantic comedy form displayed most notably in *Fulgens and Lucres.* The first is probably of least importance. *A play of loue* is somewhat confusing and artlessly arranged, and rises hardly at all above the levels of a mere debate. *A dialogue concerning witty and witless* has more of the *vis comica* in it, but does not present to us anything that calls for detailed mention. In *The Play of the wether*, on the other hand, we

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D

have a truly humorous little farce, wherein Jupiter appoints Mery-Reporte (the representative of the Vice) to summon before him all who might have complaints to make concerning the weather. A Gentylman comes to demand it "Drye and not mysty, the wynde calme and styll," a Merchant to pray for it to be "Stormy, nor mysty, the wynde mesuráble,[1]" a Ranger to ask for "good rage of blustryng and blowynge," a Water Myller to beg for rain. At this point a Wynde Myller enters, and a quarrel breaks out between the two, to be stilled only when a Gentylwoman comes to demand "wether close and temperate." A Launder wishes for sun, and a Boy for "plente of snow to make my snow-ballys." In the face of all these suits what can Jupiter do but give variety of weather at his own good will? Obviously here we are moving away from the world of pure abstractions and of didacticism; modern farce and comedy are in the making. A still further advance is made in the trilogy of farces generally attributed to Heywood, but lately associated in part at least with the better-known name of Sir Thomas More.[2] *The pardoner and the frere* carries us at once into the real surroundings of sixteenth-century life. This is as realistic as any comedy of Ben Jonson's, and only wants the liberation of more action to become an excellent comedy-farce. *Johan Johan* is equally good. The character of the husband is excellently drawn, and the scene where he sits burning his fingers over the fire while Syr Ihãn and his wife consume the pie is excellently managed. For dialogue *The foure P.P.* is even finer. A Palmer, a Pardoner, a Potycary and a Pedler meet together and start telling stories. It is arranged that the one who tells the greatest lie will win a wager. The Pardoner tells of marvellous cures he has wrought, the Poticary of wonderful medicines. Then comes a lengthy tale by the Pardoner of how he sought a lady friend in the courts of Hades; Satan was willing to let her go on consideration that he should pardon all the women he could upon earth, women being such shrews in Hell that the place was becoming perfectly impossible. At this the

[1] moderate. [2] See the papers of Dr A. W. Reed noted above.

Palmer interrupts to say that that is most peculiar, since in the whole of his varied experience he never once found a woman out of patience. The laurels promptly go to him for his lie.

In *Calisto and Melebea* and in *Fulgens and Lucres* we are taken to another realm, the realm of romance. Here, unquestionably, is to be seen the basis on which was reared later the pure romantic comedy of Greene and Lyly and Shakespeare. In both we find the mixture of fun and rich sentiment which later was glorified in *Twelfth Night* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; and in the latter may be traced the first known appearance of a comic underplot such as we find in the Shakespearian drama.

The influence of foreign drama, and of foreign literature generally, is evident in these plays, and by this time various attempts were being made to translate or to imitate works by the classic writers or by the new bands of humanists. Thus *A new Enterlude for Chyldren to playe, named Jacke Jugeler, both wytte, and very playsent* shows the influence of Plautus' *Amphitruo*; *Necromantia* is *A dialog of the poet Lucyan . . . now lately translated*; J. Palsgrave's *The Comedye of Acolastus* (printed 1540) is a rendering "into our englysshe tongue" from the *Acolastus* (1530) of Wilhelm de Volder; and Henry Cheke's *Freewyl* (printed *c.* 1560) follows the *Tragedia del libero Arbitrio* (1546) of Francesco Nigri de Bassano. The English humanists, too, were trying their hands at dramas, sometimes in Latin, sometimes in English, generally with a religious colouring, based on classical models. Nicholas Grimald produced a *Christus redivivus. Comœdia tragica, sacra et nova* (1543) and an *Archipropheta* (1547). John Bale a series of religious plays most of which are now non-extant. Of those which have been preserved by the latter writer *A Tragedye or enterlude manyfestyng the Chefe promyses of God vnto man* (written 1538, printed 1577), *A Brefe Comedy or Enterlude of Johan Baptystes* (written 1538, printed c. 1577), and *A Comedy concernynge thre lawes* (written 1538, printed *c.* 1580) are relics of the old mystery tradition adapted to later conditions, but *Kynge Johan* (written before 1548) presents

(printed 1578). In addition to these two tragi-comedies, we possess of this group Henry Medwall's recently discovered and already mentioned *Fulgens and Lucres*, John Pikeryng's *A Newe Enterlude of Vice Conteyninge, the Historye of Horestes* (printed 1567), Thomas Preston's *A lamentable Tragedie, mixed full of pleasant mirth, conteyning the life of Cambises King of Percia* (entered in the Stationers' Register 1569–70), Richard Edwards' *The excellent Comedie of two the moste faithfullest Freendes, Damon and Pithias* (acted probably in 1564), and R. B.'s *A new Tragicall Comedie of Apius and Virginia* (entered in the Stationers' Register 1567–8). All of these are bound together by certain ties. Every one mixes "lamentable Tragedie" with "pleasant mirth" or presents an atmosphere which may be called neither comic nor tragic. In this they are thoroughly romantic in tendency, defying the rigid canon of the neo-classicists concerning the various watertight divisions of literary form. Most are romantic also in betraying the presence of native features taken from the morality plays. The old Vice appears as Haphazard in *Apius and Virginia* and as Ambidexter in *Cambises*. On the other hand, all are taken either from classical legend or from works by foreign writers of the Renascence. *Calisto and Melebea* is an adaptation of the Spanish *Celestina*; *Fulgens and Lucres* is taken from Bonaccorso da Pistoja's *De Vera Nobilitate*; the rest have some foundation on story or history of ancient days. All, moreover, show the influence both of Seneca and of Terence. The employment of types taken from the comedies of the one and the στιχομυθία (short one-lined dialogue) taken from the tragedies of the other prove the authors' indebtedness to classical example.

In view of the fact that not one of these plays has any very great literary value it is perhaps sufficient here to outline the features of one or two and take these as typical of the whole group. *Apius and Virginia* is the most "tragicall" and the most primitive of all. We are presented here with a little *Measure for Measure* picture. Virginia, the daughter of Virginius, fires the heart of the judge Apius. With the aid of Mansipulus and Haphazard he contrives

to pass a decree that Virginia shall be given to him, but she prefers death at her father's hands to shame. The little play is written throughout in jogging metre, dull enough in the serious and 'moral' parts, but not unsuitable for comic dialogue. On Haphazard's entry the author shows wherein lies his predilection. The language suddenly takes on a fresh turn and flashes with primitive vivacity :

Very well sir, very well sir, it shalbe doone,
As fast as ever I can prepare,
Who dippes with the Diuel, he had neede haue a long
    spoone,
Or els full smale will be his fare :
Yet a proper Gentileman I am of truthe
Yea that may yee see by my long side goune,
Yea, but what am I, a Scholer, or a scholemaister,
    or els som youth.
A Lawier, a studient or els a countrie cloune
A Brumman, a Baskit maker, or a Baker of Pies,
A flesh or a Fishmonger, or a sower of lies :
A Louse or a louser, a Leeke or a Larke :
A Dreamer a Drommell, a fire or a sparke :
A Caitife, a Cutthrote, a creper in corners,
A herbraine, a hangman, or a grafter of horners . . .
But yet Haphazard, be of good cheere,
Goe play and repast thee man, be mery to yeere :
Though vittaile be dainty and hard for to get.
Yet perhaps a number will die of the swet,
Though it be in hazard, yet happely I may,
Though mony be lacking, yet one day go gay.

There is something of an Autolycan spirit in the last lines. Nevertheless, while the author's heart is in this character the morality tradition keeps him true to a moral aim ; Justice, Reward, and Memorie enter as visualized abstract forms at the close of the play, and Haphazard goes gaily to his doom :

Must I needes hange, by the gods it doth spight me,
To thinke how crabbedly this silke lase will bite me :
Then come cosin cutpurs, come runne haste and folow me,
Haphazard, must hange, come folow the lyuerie.

Calisto and Melebea is equally moral, the ending of the Spanish *Celestina* having been changed, but displays again

the author's love of less serious things. The story, told in seven-line stanzas, tells how Calisto is enamoured of Melebea; he confides in his servant Sempronio, who arranges to see the bawd Celestina. The last mentioned argues with Melebea, who is about to comply, when her father, Danio, enters to narrate a dream he has had. In horror Melebea confesses her evil thought, and the play ends with exhortations to virtue. The best parts are not the 'moral' portions, but the conversations of Celestina and Melebea. The former is a kind of prototype of Juliet's nurse. She can tell a story lengthily and with evident gusto:

> Now the blessyng that our lady gaue her sone
> That same blessyng I gyue now to you all . . .
> Sempronio for me about doth inquere
> And it was told me I shuld haue found hym here
> I am sure he wyll come hyther anone
> But the whylyst I shall tell you a prety game
> I haue a wench of Sempronios a prety one
> That soiornyth with me Elecea is her name
> But the last day we were both ny a stark shame
> For . . . she lovyth one Cryto better or as well
>
> . . . .
>
> I had Cryto go vp and make hym self rome
> To hyde hym in my chamber among the brome
> Then made I Elicea syt doun a sowyng
> And I wyth my rok began for to spyn
> As who seyth of sempronio we had no knowyng
> He knokkyd at the dore and I lete hym in
> And for a countenaunce I did begyn
> To catch hym in myne armys and seyd see see
> Who kyssyth me Elicea and wyll not kys the
> Elicea for a countenaunce made her greuyd
> And wold not speke but styll dyd sowe
> Why speke ye not quod sempronio be ye meuyd
> Haue I not a cause quod she no quod he I trow
> A traytour quod she full well dost thou know
> Where hast thou ben . . .
>
> . . . .
>
> . . . put you your self in this wo

The hote fyre of loue so brennyth betwene vs
That my hart is wyth yours where euer I go
And for .iii. days absens to say to me so
In fayth me thynkyth ye be to blame
But how hark well for here begynnyth the game
Cryto in my chamber aboue that was hyddyn
I thynk lay not easyly and began to romble
Sempronio hard that and askyd who was within
Aboue in the chamber that so dyd Jomble
who quod she a louer of myne may hap ye stomble
Quod he on the trewth as many one doth
Go vp quod she and loke whether it be soth
Well quod he I go nay thought I not so
I sayd com sempronio let this foole alone
For of thy long absens she is in such wo
And half besyde her self and her wyt ny gone
Well quod he aboue yet there is one
Wylt thou know quod I ye quod he I the requere
It is a wench quod I sent me by a frere. . . .
Then he laught ye quod I no mo wordes of this
For this tyme to long we spend here amys.

Taken though Celestina may be from a Spanish source, we see here the raciness and the vigour of the English author. Melebea, too, is well drawn. Her first disgust at Celestina and then her half-playful acceptation of the latter's arguments show some skill in management of character.

In *Damon and Pithias* we approach something more elaborate. The precise 'moral' here has disappeared into the background, and we are presented with a pleasant little romantic story wherein Damon and Pithias with their faithful but outspoken servant Stephano arrive at Syracuse. Damon unwittingly allows himself to give cause for suspicion to Carisophus, a parasite and informer, and is accordingly condemned to death. On his begging leave of the monarch Dionysius to return to Greece, the latter consents, if Pithias will stand his pledge. On the day appointed, Damon not appearing, Pithias is about to be slain when Damon rushes in; the King is so affected that he takes them both into his Court. The story is added to by the pleasant humours of the kind-hearted but self-seeking philosopher Aristippus, by the pranks of the merry serving-boys Jacke and Wyll, and by the country manners

of Grime the colyer. There is a sparkle in this piece that shows Master Edwards to have been the forerunner of Lyly in more ways than one.

Fulgens and Lucres may be taken as the last typical example of this series. The Induction to this piece, with the two boy-figures, at the very start claims our attention, and the story itself is one that arouses our interest. The maiden Lucrece (or Lucres) is confronted with two lovers, Publius Cornelius, a gallant and an aristocrat, and Gayus Flaminius, lower born but of virtuous mind. The plot of the play concerns the wooing of Lucrece by these two, with her final decision to give her hand to the second. In this and in the former play we reach a stage intermediate between the morality or the moral-drama of the *Apius and Virginia* type and the full, completely formed tragedy and comedy of the University Wits. Already in *Damon and Pithias* we find wit and conceited fun as well as interesting characterization; in *Fulgens and Lucres*, as in *Promos and Cassandra*, we discover the introduction of romantic love. The real service of the authors of these plays, however, to the development of the drama lies in the driving away of the extraneous 'moral' and the consequent disappearance of abstract types and characters.

(iv) The Development of True Comedy

There can be no question but that these plays proved immensely popular; they may have offended the severer classicists such as Sidney, but they were nevertheless of the dramatic type favoured and demanded by the masses of English people. Their popularity extended from the Court of Elizabeth to the meanest of the Queen's subjects. The humanists, on the other hand, were not prepared to give up the struggle without an attempt to show their contemporaries what ought to be liked, and from their efforts came the first true English comedy and the first true English tragedy. Of the former type of drama two works have attained to a well-merited fame, the comedy by "Mr S." described as *A Ryght Pithy, Pleasaunt and merie*

The hote fyre of loue so brennyth betwene vs
That my hart is wyth yours where euer I go
And for .iii. days absens to say to me so
In fayth me thynkyth ye be to blame
But how hark well for here begynnyth the game
Cryto in my chamber aboue that was hyddyn
I thynk lay not easyly and began to romble
Sempronio hard that and askyd who was within
Aboue in the chamber that so dyd Jomble
who quod she a louer of myne may hap ye stomble
Quod he on the trewth as many one doth
Go vp quod she and loke whether it be soth
Well quod he I go nay thought I not so
I sayd com sempronio let this foole alone
For of thy long absens she is in such wo
And half besyde her self and her wyt ny gone
Well quod he aboue yet there is one
Wylt thou know quod I ye quod he I the requere
It is a wench quod I sent me by a frere. . . .
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Comedie: Intytuled Gammer gurtons Nedle (*c.* 1550–3; printed 1575) and Nicholas Udall's *Roister Doister* (*c.* 1553–4; printed 1566). While, in point of date, *Gammer Gurton's Needle* takes priority, it must be noted that this was a University play and consequently somewhat out of the regular movement in dramatic form; Udall's play remains the first complete English comedy designed for public performance in London.

In this drama we may clearly trace the impression of two forces—that of the comic interlude and that of Terence. Already the works of the Latin playwright had crept into an English dress; they were being read in the original by the humanists and studied in translation by those whose Latinity was too weak to permit them to gain the full flavour of the original. In general, we may say that the influence of Terence tended in two directions. From his plays the new dramatists learned how to work out a full plot. *Roister Doister* is no mere actionless farce or scanty debate, but a comedy full of incident and of adventure, well ordered and well planned. Not only in form, however, did Terence influence the rising English drama. In depiction of character too he taught men many intimate secrets. The witty lovers, the testy old fathers, the intriguing servants of sixteenth-century comedy all take their rise directly from his example. Roister Doister, the hero of this particular play, is after all only a transformed replica of the bombastic *miles gloriosus* of Roman times. A mere imitation of Terence, on the other hand, might well have led toward nothing but dullness and insipidity, and happily the English playwrights of the sixteenth century had their own native dramatic tradition on which to fall back. Comparing Udall's work with any of the plays of Shakespeare, we may consider it crude and uninteresting; yet the *vis comica* is there in however disguised a form. There is a freshness in the dialogue which shows that the author had heard or studied the rough yet bright and interesting conversations of the earlier interludes. There is a natural raciness in the work which is independent of classical imitation. The morality tradition,

also, had taught Udall something. If Ralph Roister Doister himself is a representative of the classic *miles gloriosus*, Matthew Merygreeke is simply the old Vice of native English tradition given an English name and [illegible], not on a devil, but on a swaggering braggart.

Gammer Gurton's Needle displays in the main the same features with the addition of even more realistic touches. The story of the play is of the slightest, all hinging upon the loss of a needle and on the consequent intrigues and jealousies, yet the play has an enduring charm. The rustic setting, the rural types speaking many of them in country dialect, and the naturalistic dialogue all show us that this "Mr S.," the author of the play, has not forgotten to look at life as well as at Terence. Here, we may say, the modern period of comedy has well begun.

It was not, however, only Terence who served as a model for the English playwrights in their search for form. The Renascence had produced in Italy two schools of drama, the *commedia erudita* and the *commedia dell'arte*, both based theoretically on classic example. Unquestionably the latter influenced English comedy both in the sixteenth and in the seventeenth centuries; and the former provided at least some suggestions to the early writers. For the introduction of this *commedia erudita* we must look to George Gascoigne, an author notable for his inventive powers rather than for any great literary capability. The Italian comedy of intrigue first made its appearance in *Supposes* (Gray's Inn, 1566), an adaptation of Ariosto's *I Suppositi*, a rendering of particular importance not only for its subject-matter, but also for its medium. It is the first prose comedy in English. This question of medium is one of particular significance. In medieval days all the dramas were penned in some one or other stanza-form; the interludes and the moralities were all rimed. The movement to blank verse marked an endeavour to secure a style that should be more realistic and consequently more fitting for the exposition of ordinary comic characters and episodes, while the final step was taken by Gascoigne when he discarded altogether the fettering restrictions of metrical

form. Most of the romantic dramatists of a later date retained the verse form for the greater portion of their plays, as expressing more fully their desires, but almost always that verse was intermingled with prose of a more realistic kind. Akin to this play of *Supposes*, but in verse, may be noted the anonymous *Bugbears* (extant in manuscript), an adaptation of A. F. Grazzini's *La Spiritata*—another attempt to popularize the Italian comedy in England. These two dramas, to judge from the titles of other plays preserved in the Revels Accounts, were merely two out of a large number of similar translations or adaptations from the Italian.

(v) Senecan Tragedies and Chronicle History Plays

In comedy there is not such a direct break between the classic and romantic theories as there is in tragedy. After all, these versions or imitations from the works of Terence or of Italian writers could easily be appreciated by classicist and romanticist alike. The neo-classical writers forbade the intermixture of comedy and tragedy, it is true; but the public could fully appreciate the spirit of a purely mirthful play. Both, moreover, realized that, after all, the basis of true comedy lies in nature; the realistic touches in the first two English comic dramas amply prove this. In the realm of tragedy it was far otherwise. Here we find a distinct cleavage, for the neo-classicists demanded dignified rhetoric rather than free expression of emotion, narration rather than the display of action, static qualities rather than movement. The popular audiences were wholly on the side of lyricism, liberty, and action. They could discern no justification for the set of rules instituted by the severer among the critics. We discover, therefore, a complete break between the tragi-comedies written presumably for the more popular audiences and the neo-classical tragedies written for the spectators of a more humanistic type. From the very first there could be no doubt that the popular opinion was to win in the end. Not

theme. *Tancred and Gismund*, on the other hand, deserves notice for its thoroughly passionate plot, in which a lover visits his mistress by means of an underground cavern, eventually meeting his death at the hands of her father Horror is introduced here at the close of the play when the maiden is presented with her lover's heart in a cup of gold. In style this tragedy marks no advance. The chill monotony of the choral verses and the insipidity of the στιχομυθία make the work but dull reading. The romantic playwrights had yet to teach the classicists that nothing truly dramatic could come from lines such as the following:

> *Gismund.* Oh syr these teares love challengeth as due.
> *Tancred.* But reason sayth that it no whitt avayle
> *Gismund.* Yet can I not my passions so subdue
> *Tancred.* Your fond affections ought not to prevaile
> *Gismund.* Who can but plaint the losse of such a one
> *Tancred.* Of mortall thinges no losse shuld seme so strange
> *Gismund.* Such gemme was he as erst was never none.[1]

At the same time, while we smile at the puerilities of verses such as these, we must remember that this neo-classic author not only taught the romantic poets how to form an ordered whole of a theme of passion, but passed on the rough basis of the Senecan form for Shakespeare's use in his early career. *Jocasta* is even duller and more monotonous than *Tancred and Gismund*; but the play has a decided value in the fact that it is an adaptation of an Italian original, Lodovico Dolce's *Giocasta*, even although the title-page declares it to be a translation from Euripides.

The Senecan style was destined to play a large part in the history of later tragic effort. Many writers strove to reproduce as faithfully as possible the rigidity of the classic stage, with chorus and all complete, as Kyd did in his *Cornelia* (1593; printed 1594); others, such as the author of *The Lamentable Tragedie of Locrine* (*c.* 1591; printed 1595), attempted to follow the lead of Sackville and Norton in adapting romantic material to classic treatment; still others, such as Kyd in *The Spanish Tragedy*, boldly fused

[1] The text is taken from the manuscript version entitled *Gismond of Salerne.*

Senecan and romantic methods together, introducing a new and more forceful type of drama. While the neo-classic style never flourished in England, we must bear in mind that it was the neo-classicists who taught the play-wrights of the age form and dignity of expression.

One other main dramatic development of these transitional years has been mentioned—the elaboration of the historical play. Already we have seen how Bale in *Kynge Johan* was making use, however unhistorically, of an historical monarch in order to enforce a moral or religious precept; his example must have been followed by others, until writers arose daring enough to pen plays on English history for no acknowledged didactic aim. It is perfectly apparent that this movement was almost entirely on the popular side. There might be opportunity here for the introduction of some of the external features of the Senecan drama, but the unities of time and place had to be abandoned, and the subject-matter allowed, nay demanded, an amount of bustle and action far removed from the static calm beloved by the neo-classicists. Of these historical plays many must have been lost. Barely a dozen are extant, although from contemporary records we know that the type was popular. All of these, it may be observed, were written for the public stages, not for Court production or for performance at the Inns or the Temple. Many of the chronicle histories are well known because of their relationship to Shakespeare's work: *The Troublesome Raigne of Iohn King of England* (c. 1590; printed [illegible]), *The First Part of the Contention betwixt the two famous Houses of Yorke and Lancaster* (c. 1592; printed [illegible]), *The True Tragedie of Richard Duke of Yorke* (c. [illegible]; printed [illegible]), *The True Tragedie of Richard the Third* (c. [illegible]; printed 1594), *The Famous Victories of Henry the fifth* (c. [illegible]; printed 1598), and *The True Chronicle History of King Leir* (c. 1594; printed 1605) are each the basis of one of Shakespeare's plays. To these might be added *The Raigne of King Edward the third* (c. 1595; printed [illegible]) and *The Famous Historye of the life and death of Captaine Thomas Stukeley* (1596; printed 1605). Most of these plays are [illegible]

[illegible]

weak in construction and in characterization, but in nearly every one there is the presence of some marked poetical features or dramatic touches. They show the establishment upon the English stage of a type of drama in which the morality tradition, the Senecan model, and the interlude have all played their parts. They show the love of action and romantic incident, the passion for freedom of expression and for poetic dialogue, which is always to be associated with the rise and development of the Elizabethan drama.

A backward glance at the growth of dramatic form as briefly described in this section reveals certain clearly traceable tendencies. We note first the elaboration of realism in comedy and in tragedy and the consequent casting off of the personified characters of the morality plays. On the other hand, there is the attempt to secure decorum and dignity on the part of the neo-classicists which makes certain dramas of this time, if not unreal, at least artificial in diction and in characterization. This struggle between the classicists and the dramatists holding to the native tradition colours the whole work of the period, and corresponds to two types of dramatic performance. The classical tragedies and comedies are nearly all confined to the Inns of Court or to the Universities; the more romantic plays are practically all associated with the popular stages. For long the humanists struggled; even Ben Jonson in the seventeenth century fondly hoped to oust the *Hamlets* and *Othellos* from the stage with his *Sejanus* and *Catiline*. The age, however, obviously wished for no trammels upon the theatre. Freedom, action, passion, the audiences desired, and these they found in the work of the romantic playwrights. A summary of the development of these years, therefore, displays several salient lines of dramatic progress: the classical tragedy, decorous and well ordered, but lacking in emotion and movement; the crude tragi-comedy, showing a mingling of many diverse elements in a somewhat chaotic form, but pointing the way, as in *Promos and Cassandra*, to the romantic comedy of Greene and Shakespeare; the historical

play of a wholly novel type; the true comedy, as in *Roister Doister*, uniting Terentian and English ideals; and the cruder sort of farcical comedy seen in the native interludes of Heywood and his companions. The next chapter will show how, by the endeavours of a group of men who were the older contemporaries of Shakespeare, these types were fused into one.

CHAPTER IV

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PUBLIC THEATRES
THE UNIVERSITY WITS

The Theatre in the Late Sixteenth Century

THE tracing of dramatic developments has already taken us to the nineties of the sixteenth century, a date when the theatrical activity in England was in full swing. By this time the actual form of the miracle stage had long been forgotten by Metropolitan audiences, and a new type of theatre had been evolved. The interludes seem to have been performed mainly in the halls of well-to-do patrons of the drama, possibly on a raised daïs at one end of the room. The Court plays were also similarly arranged, with the addition of more spectacular and scenic elements. This was for the upper classes. For the populace in general inn-yards seem to have formed the first regular theatres since the time when the medieval crowds stood round the pageant in the village square. These inn-yards were usually square, with galleries running round the walls. Here it was that the actors hastily erected their stages of rough board and performed their interludes, and, later, their more elaborate plays. But such yards must soon have been found unsatisfactory, chiefly because of the lack of a permanent stage and the inconveniences attendant upon that want. We are not surprised, therefore, to find that the thought of building permanent structures for theatrical performances soon forced itself upon the actors and those interested in the companies. The first playhouse in London was erected in the year 1576 in Shoreditch, well out of reach of the civic authorities.

The reason for the location of this theatre is to be found in the composition of the companies of actors and in the Government's attitude toward play-performances in general.



The Bankside, Southwark 66

The four theatres (indicated by flags) are the Swan, Hope, Rose, and Globe

For long the Court had had its regular bands of minstrels and players, holdi [illegible] but with the growth o [illegible] rally sprang into being [illegible] un-associated with the Court, although usually attached to the service of a particular lord of the realm. The difficulty of dealing satisfactorily with these bodies of actors soon made itself felt, and as a consequence there was passed a law that all players not in the service of a lord should be treated as rogues and vagabonds. This, in reality, made little difference to the actors, as many peers were willing to sponsor companies of players who wore the regular liveries of retainers, but were independent and earned their own livings. The Queen's men, the Lord Admiral's men, the Lord Chamberlain's men, and a host of others were secure from interference so long as they held to the ordinary laws of the land. The civic authorities in London and elsewhere mainly looked upon this licensed playing [illegible] they [illegible] within [illegible] first theatres, the Theatre itself, the Rose, the Globe, the Fortune, the Swan, were built either in the Shoreditch area, convenient of access from the east yet outside the walls of London, or else on the Bankside, to the south of the Thames, a noted haunt for seekers of amusement, both legitimate and otherwise. Before the close of the sixteenth century the only acting that took place within the City was [illegible] playhouse, were all designated by the title 'public' in contradistinction to the 'private' theatre at Blackfriars, and, later, to those at Salisbury Court and Drury Lane. The private theatre, which becomes of immense importance in the early seventeenth century, was roofed in, lit by artificial light, and attended normally by a better-class audience. The public theatre was open to the sky, performances there took place in broad daylight.

and all classes intermingled in the yard or in the galleries. It is with this latter type of theatre that we are most concerned. Possibly no great thought was devoted to the designing of the first playhouse, and certainly later theatrical promoters were content to follow the general outlines of the buildings erected before their time. We shall be historically justified if we regard these theatres as the spontaneous expression of a natural love of dramatic shows, not based on any very profound determination on the part of actors or of managers to provide for the audiences the best and the most fitting accommodation. Fundamentally the designers of these public playhouses seem to have looked for a model to the inn-yard, although possibly some humanistic leanings may have given to them a few suggestions taken from the Roman amphitheatres. Their theatres, in any case, were round or octagonal,[1] with a stage set in the middle of a benchless open yard and tiers of galleries running round the entirety of the house. Over the stage was a small roof supported by pillars, and on top of all appeared a tiny turret, on which flew a flag to indicate that a play was in progress and from which a trumpeter announced to all the commencement of a performance.

It is not necessary here to enter into the many debatable problems connected with the *minutiæ* of Elizabethan stage construction. A summary of generally accepted truths, in so far as these bear upon the structure of the plays, will be sufficient.

The main stage was open, with a curtain at the back and two or more doors, through which the actors entered. Not only did the 'groundlings' surround this platform, but gallants able to pay for the privilege sat on the stage itself. Two important consequences resulted from this. Firstly, no scenery as we know it could be introduced on the main stage. Primitive effects securable by the introduction of movable properties were all that the limitations allowed. A tree in a tub might symbolize a forest, a bed wheeled in might suggest a chamber, a flaring torch might suggest in the warmth of a June sun the darkness of a

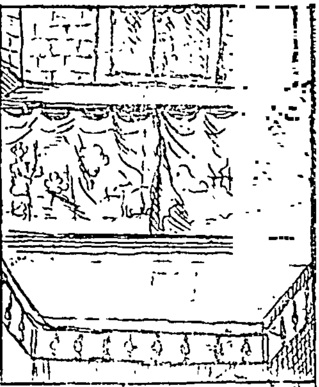
[1] The Fortune, erected at a later date, was square.

cavern, but beyond that nothing was possible. Having no obligation to consider the expense of scenery, the actor-managers did not require to reflect on the actual settings of plays; and the dramatists were free to make four or forty scenes to their plays as they wished. The structure of Elizabethan dramas, therefore, cannot be discussed on the standards of present-day theatrical art. Still further, the absence of scenery made necessary the introduction of a large amount of explanatory reference. The audience had to be told it was dark, had to be let into the secret that this was a hall, a garden, a castle, a dungeon, and to this we owe a great deal of the sheer poetry of the late sixteenth-century and early seventeenth-century drama. Such description, rendered necessary by the special conditions of the Elizabethan theatre, would be manifestly artificial and out of place in modern plays designed for a 'picture-frame' stage. The second consequence of the fact that the audience so surrounded the actors was that more intimacy between the two was possible than nowadays. The audience came, as it were, *into* the drama. The clothes of the players ... ethan clothes, if a ... lusion was perhaps ... n time, and this led ... amatic conventions ... The soliloquy is one of these. For an actor to mouth out a soliloquy in a large theatre from behind the footlights so that his words may carry to the galleries is purely artificial; but for an actor in this Elizabethan playhouse to utter his thoughts as it might be to his intimate friends surrounding him is no such absurdity. So too with the aside. The aside in modern times has to be shouted, and the actor can never get across the footlights to say ... playhouse it must have been ... former to turn for a moment ... and softly whisper his inner conviction or determination.

This main stage, however, by no means exhausted the possibilities of the Elizabethan theatre. At least two other portions were utilized by the actors, the rear stage and the

balconies. Behind the back wall lay a smaller inner room, possibly a curtained part of the tiring-house, in which occasionally scenes were enacted. This portion of the stage could at will be 'discovered' by drawing the curtain, and here property of various sorts might be set while action was proceeding on the outer stage. In this inner room Ferdinand and Miranda would be seen playing their innocent game of chess; it could pass for a cave, a bedroom, a shop, at the desire of the players. While nothing can be said for the purely fanciful theory which supposes that all Elizabethan plays were formed on a plan which made action on the main stage and action on the inner stage alternate, the use of this room behind the curtain with its possibilities for stage settings must not be lost sight of when we study the Elizabethan drama. The other locality utilized by the actors stood above the stage proper. It has already been noted that galleries ran round the entirety of the house, and that portion of the lower gallery which passed over the stage proper seems frequently to have been used by the players as well as by the audience. One section of it no doubt housed the musicians: it was the "musique room"; but another served for Juliet's balcony, for the walls of Calais, or for a battlement of the Tower. The stage direction, so often to be met with in the original texts, bidding the characters "Enter above" invariably applies to this balcony over the stage. In the balcony were evidently real windows, which could be opened and shut at will, and the doors below could be regarded as street doors leading to a house, the first floor of which was the gallery itself. It is only by an understanding of these three stages and their constant use by the actors that we can gain a true appreciation of Elizabethan stagecraft.

Finally, a word must be said concerning the retention of older conventions borrowed from the mystery tradition. In many ways the Elizabethan theatre was symbolic, in that the audience were prepared to accept not complete realism, but a suggestion of realism, in the effects produced on the stage. One or two examples may serve to make this clear. A situation frequently occurs in plays where





TWO ELIZABETHAN STAGES

one character is presumed to be in a room, pursued by his enemies. He dashes in and locks a door while his foes clamour without. On the Globe stage quite obviously this had to be done conventionally. All the doors leading to the stage could not be locked, and the spectators were content if but one was closed. The others were put for the moment out of mind. So, too, the old convention whereby characters could walk over or round the stage and thereby be supposed to travel many weary leagues was retained in a slightly altered form. A dramatist, for

regarded by the actors. We have already seen from the records of the mystery plays how precious these costumes were for medieval players and spectators; the invaluable records of Philip Henslowe preserved at Dulwich College prove the wealth of the Elizabethan companies in the same respect.[1] If the actors did not expend much money on scenery they certainly expended it on clothes. Thus in an "Inventary of the goods of my Lord Admeralls men, tacken the 10 of Marche in the yeare 1598" we read of certain rich stuffs "gone and loste," including

> j orenge taney satten dublet, layd thycke with gowld lace . . .
> j payr of carnatyon satten Venesyons, layd with gold lace . . .
> Harey the fyftes dublet
> Harey the fyftes vellet gowne

and in another inventory of "Clownes Sewtes and Hermetes Sewtes" we hear of

> j senatores gowne, j hoode, and 5 senetores capes
> j sewtte for Nepton . . .

[1] For Henslowe's *Diary* and the accompanying papers see the excellen edition prepared by Dr W. W. Greg.

iiij Herwodes [? heralds'] cottes, and iij sogers cottes, and j green gown for Maryan [*i.e.*, Maid Marian]
vj grene cottes for Roben Hoode, and iiij knaves sewtes . . .
The Mores lymbes,[1] and Hercolles lymes . . .
Eves bodeyes [bodice] . . .
j payer of yelow cotton sleves, j gostes sewt, and j gostes bodeyes.

So, also, we learn of other costumes in the possession of the Lord Admiral's men :

j payer of whitte saten Venesons cut with coper lace
j ash coller satten doublett, lacyd with gold lace
j peche coller satten doublett . . .
j Mores cotte . . .
j payer of French hosse, cloth of gowld
j payer of cloth of gowld hosse with sylver paines . . .
Tamberlynes cotte, with coper lace . . .
Tamberlanes breches, of crymson vellvet. . . .

The list is a lengthy one, and shows the riches in this respect of the sixteenth-century companies. Ere leaving this subject it may be of interest to note a few of the 'properties' in the possession of the same company in 1598. We read there of

j rocke, j cage, j tombe, j Hell mought.

The hell-mouth is clearly a relic of the mystery plays. The rock appears in many dramas, and the cage was no doubt Bajazet's cage in *Tamburlaine*. The inventory continues :

j tome of Guido, j tome of Dido, j bed-steade . . .
ij marche panes, & the sittie of Rome.

This "city of Rome" is interesting. When we put it alongside of a later entry, "the clothe of the Sone and Mone," we may well ask ourselves whether primitive painted scenery of a kind may not have been occasionally used even in the sixteenth century. The other articles, however, are all either manual properties or properties of a material sort :

j globe, & j golden scepter; iij clobes [clubs] . . .
j gowlden fleece; ij rackets; j baye tree . . .
j wooden canepie; owld Mahemetes head . . .
Ierosses [Iris's] head, and raynbowe; j littell alter.

[1] Malone suggests these were Aaron's limbs for *Titus Andronicus*. 'Hercolles' is Hercules.

viij viserdes; Tamberlyne brydell; j wooden matook.
Cupedes bowe, and quiver . . .
j bores head & Serberosse [Cerberus] iij heades . . .
ij mose [moss] banckes, & j snake . . .
Mercures wings; Tasso picter; j helmet with a dragon; j shelde, with iij lyones; j elme bowle . . .
iij tymbrells; j dragon in fostes [Faustus]
j lyone; ij lyon heades; j great horse with his leages [legs]; j sack-bute . . .
j poopes miter.
iij Imperial crownes; j playne crowne.
j gostes crowne . . .
j cauderm [cauldron] for the Jewe [in *The Jew of Malta*].

Many of these properties were evidently designed especially for plays of Marlowe and Greene, and these lists of Henslowe, with their many references to *Tamburlaine* and *Dr Faustus* and *The Jew of Malta*, fitly introduce us to the work of the University Wits.

(ii) The University Wits; Lodge, Nashe, and Peele

In dealing with the work of this group of men it will be necessary to bear in mind the somewhat chaotic condition of the drama that preceded them. The classicists had

their academical training, to unite these two forces and thus to give to Shakespeare a pliable and fitting medium for the expression of his genius. All these men, with the doubtful exception of Kyd, had had a training at one of the Universities. Robert Greene (1558–92) took his B.A. at Cambridge in 1578 and his M.A. in 1583; Thomas Lodge (c. 1557–1625) entered Trinity College, Oxford, in 1573, taking his B.A. in 1577; John Lyly (c. 1554–1606) matriculated at Magdalen College, Oxford, in 1571, securing his B.A. in 1573 and his M.A. in 1575; Christopher Marlowe (1564–93) matriculated at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.

in 1581, took his B.A. in 1584 and his M.A. in 1587 Thomas Nashe (1567–*c.* 1601) went to St John's College, Cambridge, in 1582, and was awarded his B.A. in 1586; George Peele (*c.* 1557–96) entered Broadgates Hall, Oxford, in 1571 and Christ Church in 1574, taking his B.A. in 1577 and his M.A. in 1579. Thomas Kyd (1558–94), although he had a training at Merchant Taylors School, does not seem to have attended any university. His relations with the others, no less than his interest in Seneca, nevertheless entitle him to be considered in this group. Nearly all these men contributed to literature other works besides plays. Lyly gave a new prose style in *Euphues*; Nashe wrote his picaresque novel *Jacke Wilton*; Lodge produced the fanciful *Rosalynde*, and Greene the romantic *Menaphon*. Practically all, too, are alike in living peculiarly Bohemian lives in the Grub Street of their day. Marlowe died in a tavern brawl from a poniard wound; Greene spent his last hours in writing a penitential *Groatsworth of Wit bought with a Million of Repentance*; Lodge, according to Gosson, became "little better than a vagrant, looser than liberty, [and] lighter than vanity itself"; Lyly is spoken of as "Vicemaster of Pauls and the Foolemaster of the Theatre"; Nashe seems to have roystered it in the usual manner, and Peele's *Merry Conceited Jests* no doubt give an indica- ion of that author's life. As for Kyd, we know how ot into trouble with Marlowe in the year 1593 for writin ertain "atheistic" papers and was arrested on suspicio having penned some "loud and mutinous libels." They re all Bohemians, careless, sometimes ungodly, heavy nkers, acquainted with sin; but they gave to us the ering blank verse of *Tamburlaine*, the lovely romance *Friar Bacon*, the insight into character of *Dr Faustus*. atever they were in actual life they laid a sure basis he English theatre.

may be best here to take those who have given least e stage, reserving the criticism of Greene, Lyly, Kyd, Marlowe to the last. Lodge has left nothing save *Vounds of Ciuill War* (*c.* 1588; printed 1594) and a n of *A Looking Glasse for London and England* (*c.* 1590;

... collaboration with Greene. ... orality ... Nor ... ile he has a decided power over the lyric and a charm in his fictional art, gave practically nothing to the theatre. In this respect he is the least of the University Wits. Nashe has left very little more than Lodge—only his comedy of *Summers last will and Testament* (1592; printed 1600) along with a not quite determinable share in *Dido* survive, although we know that he took part in writing the unfortunate *Isle of Dogs* (non-extant) in 1597. It is peculiar that the one play preserved to us should also be cast in something of the morality tradition, although it is modified by the free introduction of realistic comedy and satirical references. Nashe is another of this group more important for his work in fiction than for his dramas.

Besides three or four lost plays, and a suggestion of his pen in upward of a dozen dramas of the late sixteenth century, five works by Peele have been preserved—*The Araygnement of Paris A Pastorall* (printed 1584), *The Battell of Alcazar* (c. 1589; printed 1594),[1] *The Famous Chronicle of King Edwarde the first* (printed 1593), *The Love of King David and Fair Bethsabe* (c. 1593; printed 1599), and *The Old Wiues Tale. A pleasant conceited Comedie* (c. 1592; printed 1595). These form a surer basis for judging the author's work as a playwright than was given us in the case of Lodge or of Nashe, and over and above these regular plays there are besides one or two entertainments which cast some further light on his power as a dramatic poet. As is evident, Peele's theatrical work is diverse in character. A pastoral, a romantic tragedy, a chronicle history, a kind ... learly ... In all ... His

[1] On the problems connected with the relationship between the printed text of this play and the manuscript 'plot' see W. W. Greg's *Two Elizabethan Stage Abridgements: The Battle of Alcazar and Orlando Furioso* (Malone Society, 1922).

verse at times has caught something of the Marlovian melody, as in the last scene of *King Edward I*:

> *Gloster* thy King is partner of thy heauiness,
> Although nor tongue nor eies bewraie his meane,
> For I haue lost a flowre as faire as thine,
> A loue more deare, for *Elinor* is dead,
> But since the heauenlie ordinance decrees,
> That all thinges change in their prefixed time,
> Be thou content and beare it in thy breast,
> Thy swelling griefe as needes I must mine,
> Thy *Ione* of *Acon* and my Queen deceast,
> Shall haue that Honor as beseemes their state.
> You peeres of England, see in roiall pompe,
> These breathles bodies be entombed straight,
> With tried colours couered all with blacke,
> Let Spanish steedes as swift as fleeting winde,
> Conuaie these Princes to their funerall.

At other times it catches a new note of quiet romanticism which comes closer to the music of Greene. At his best he rises to a perfect height of lyric diction, as in the oft-quoted lines in his first play:

> Not *Iris* in her pride and brauerie,
> Adornes her arche with such varietie:
> Nor doth the milke white way in frostie night,
> Appeare so faire and beautifull in sight:
> As done these fieldes, and groues, and sweetest bowre
> Bestrewed and deckt with partie collord flowers.
> Alonge the bubling brookes & siluer glyde,
> That at the bottome doth in sylence slyde,
> The waterie flowers and lillies on the bankes,
> Like blazing cometes burgen all in rankes:
> Vnder the *Hathorne* and the *Poplar* tree,
> Where sacred *Phœbe* may delight to be:
> The *Primerose* and the purple *Hyacinthe*,
> The dayntie *Violet* and the holsome *Minthe*:
> The dooble *Daisie*, and the Couslip queene
> Of sommer floures, do ouer peere the greene:
> And rounde about the valley as ye passe,
> Yee may ne see for peeping flowers the grasse.

...try, however, brilliant as it may be, does not produce ... and we note in Peele a certain weakness in con... ...ve power. His plots are decidedly slight, and he ...t seem to take sufficient care in the ordering of his

scenes. Moreover, he allows poetry to enter into scenes from which it ought to be excluded. In *David and Bethsabe*, for example, Absalon is hanged by the hair. In this uncomfortable situation one would hardly look for well-ordered blank-verse utterance from him, but Peele cannot resist the temptation to indulge in his favourite *métier*; cries Absalon:

> What angrie angel sitting in these shades,
> Hath laid his cruell hands vpon my haire,
> And holds my body thus twixt heauen and earth ?
> Hath Absalon no souldier neere his hand,
> That may vntwine me this vnpleasant curle,
> Or wound this tree that rauisheth his lord ?
> O God behold the glorie of thy hand,
> And choisest fruit of Natures workemanship,
> Hang like a rotten branch vpon this tree,
> Fit for the axe, and ready for the fire.
> Since thou withholdst all ordinarie helpe
> To lose my bodie from this bond of death,
> O let my beautie fill these sencelesse plants,
> With sence and power to lose me from this plague,
> And worke some wonder to *preuent his death*,
> Whose life thou madst a speciall miracle.

When all is said and done, it is Peele's comedies that will prove his most lasting claim to fame. The early pastoral exists for no plot, but for its beauty of romantic wording, and *The Old Wives' Tale* has a perfect charm o romantic humour. It is in the development of tha particular type of humour which was later graced by Shakespeare that Peele proves himself greatest. Like Shakespeare he can induce laughter of a peculiarly mellowed sort by the juxtaposition of reality and romance, and h can create an atmosphere which unites these two world in one harmony. In *The Old Wives' Tale* Antic, Frolic and Fantastic enter lost in a forest; Clunch, coming i with a lantern and a candle, takes them to his cottage There Madge, his wife, starts telling a fairy-tale, whe suddenly the characters of the tale take visible shape an enact their story before the cottagers. Into this purel romantic fantasy Peele succeeds in introducing an amour of literary satire, Gabriel Harvey's attempts at Latinize

verse in English being subjected to particularly severe ridicule. This is the first dramatic literary satire in English; it is one of the completest expressions of romanticism in the sixteenth century outside of the works of Shakespeare himself.

(iii) Marlowe

The four greater members of the group of University Wits remain for consideration; each of these deserves a far more detailed attention than could be devoted to Lodge, Nashe, or Peele. It may be well to start with the most individual and the most talented of the pre-Shakespearians, Christopher Marlowe. Of his work several well-known plays have been preserved: *Tamburlaine the Great* (c. 1587; printed 1590), *The tragicall History of D. Faustus* (c. 1588; printed 1604 and 1616), *The Famous Tragedy of the Rich Iew of Malta* (c. 1589; printed 1633), *The troublesome raigne and lamentable death of Edward the second, King of England* (c. 1592; printed 1594), *The Massacre at Paris* (1593; the one contemporary quarto is undated), and *The Tragedie of Dido Queen of Carthage* (c. 1593; printed 1594 as by Marlowe and Nashe). Besides these, *Lusts Dominion; Or, The Lascivious Queen* was printed in 1657 as by Marlowe, but has been almost unanimously rejected as a work of his pen. Quite rightly it is the first four plays which have been hailed by enthusiasts as masterpieces of dramatic art. *The Massacre at Paris* is admittedly a poorly wrought and poorly written drama; and *Dido* rarely rises above the levels of unimpassioned blank verse. Its sole interest lies in the presentation of the heroine, a presentation which takes on added significance when we consider the general lack of women characters in Marlowe's other plays.

Of the four greater dramas *Tamburlaine*, *Dr Faustus*, and *The Jew of Malta* stand together as displaying certain common characteristics all distinct from the ordinary tragic conventions of the time. These characteristics may best be discussed together, as a separate analysis of each individual play rather tends to obscure the unity of conception which dominates all three. In the first place we

note the influence of Machiavelli, who, as we can see from the many references in contemporary literature, was more and more impressing himself upon the English public. Most heard of him by report, and took him as a symbol of all that was atheistical, immoral, and corrupt. In reality, Machiavelli is far from corrupt. His *Prince* is merely a summing up of regular Renascence ideals of conduct; it is the culmination of that individualism which marks off the newly awakened Europe from the anonymity and communal ideals of the Middle Ages. Machiavelli had made a god of *virtù*, that quality in a man which drives him to find free and full expressions for his own thoughts and emotions. It is this *virtù* on which Marlowe has seized, not without some tremors of conscience in spite of his liberated mind. So he presents his heroes, Tamburlaine, Dr Faustus, and Barabas, overriding the ordinary moral codes of their times in an effort to find the complete realization of their particular ideals; and in *The Jew of Malta* he brings Machiavelli forward in person to speak the prologue to his tragedy. His words show a peculiar mingling of true love of Machiavelli's philosophy and half-terrified awe resulting from a contemplation of his "villainy."

> Albeit the world thinke *Macheuill* is dead,
> Yet was his soule but flowne beyond the *Alpes* . . .
> To some perhaps my name is odious,
> But such as loue me gard me from their tongues,
> And let them know that I am *Macheuill*,
> And weigh not men, and therefore not mens words.
> Admir'd I am of those that hate me most.
> Though some speake openly against my bookes,
> Yet will they reade me, and thereby attaine
> To *Peters* Chayre: And when they cast me off,
> Are poyson'd by my climing followers.
> I count Religion but a childish Toy,
> And hold there is no sinne but Ignorance. . . .
> O' th poore petty wites
> Let me be enuy'd and not pittied!

The "poore petty wites" are those who possess not *virtù* and the passion for self-realization.

One important result of this insistence upon *virtù* must be noted. Call it what we please, *virtù*, ambition, will,

tends to overlook class, and accordingly the dramas of Marlowe break away slightly from the more ancient medieval plan. For the Middle Ages tragedy was a thing of princes, and princes only; for Marlowe it was a thing of individual heroes. Thus his Tamburlaine, king though he may be by the end of the drama, is born a peasant. The Jew is but a Mediterranean moneylender, and Faustus an ordinary German doctor and alchemist. The medieval conception of the royalty of tragedy is here being supplanted by the Renascence ideal of individual worth. It is the union of the two which gives us the majesty of *Macbeth* and of *Lear*.

In the same way, we may observe a change in Marlowe's dramas from the medieval theory that tragedy invariably represents a falling into misery or adversity from prosperity or happiness. Death comes to all Marlowe's tragic heroes, but the kernel of his dramas lies rather in the struggle of a brave human soul against forces which in the end prove too great for it. The medieval conception of tragedy was a distinctly moral one; drama had to show this falling into adversity, and thereby inculcate a didactic lesson. There is no moral of this sort in Marlowe's plays. The interest centres wholly on the personality of the hero, and the pleasure derived from the drama comes from watching that personality, comes from the sense of greatness which that personality brings with it. This, again, is a secret which Marlowe taught to Shakespeare. Part, at least, of the tremendous impression we gain from witnessing *Othello* and *Macbeth* springs from the essential nobility of the heroes of these two plays. This is one of Marlowe's most outstanding contributions to the development of a truly august type of English tragedy. His main conception of serious drama—Renascence *virtù* battling on to success and then falling unconquered before fate—is at the root of all the great seventeenth-century tragic activity; only, Shakespeare made his figures more human and stressed more the fatal flaw in the greatness of their characters.

In other ways, too, Marlowe in these plays advanced far beyond the previous attempts at serious drama. Already by the time when *Gorboduc* appeared blank verse had taken

the place of rime as the chief medium for tragic dialogue, but that blank verse was still unformed, artificial, and monotonous. Marlowe it was who breathed into it the life-spirit of poetry. All his heroes are essentially poets in their nature, for they are all reflections of Marlowe's [illegible] for earthly dominion, for power over the intangible, for [illegible]

> Your Maiesty shall shortly haue your wish,
> and ride in tryumph through *Persepolis*,

says Meander, and the monarch's reply is thoroughly characteristic:

> And ride in tryumph through *Persepolis*?
> Is it not braue to be a King, *Techelles*?
> *Vsumcasane* and *Theridamas*,
> Is it not passing braue to be a [illegible]
> And ride in [illegible]

His unquenchable [illegible] monious of [illegible] passion [illegible]

> Nature, that [illegible]
> Warring within our [illegible]
> Doth teach vs all to haue [illegible]
> Our soules, whose faculties [illegible]
> The wondrous architecture [illegible]
> and measure euery wandring [illegible]
> Still climing after knowledge [illegible]
> and alwaies mouing as [illegible]
> Wils vs to weare [illegible]
> [illegible]

It is he, too, who [illegible] own love of the [illegible] time what must have [illegible]

became an art, and what must ever be felt by poets to the end of Time:

If all the pens that euer poets held
Had fed the feeling of their maisters thoughts,
And euery sweetnes that inspir'd their harts,
Their minds, and muses on admyred theames;
If all the heauenly Quintessence they still
From their immortall flowers of Poesy,
Wherein, as in a myrrour, we perceiue
The highest reaches of a humaine wit;
If these had made one Poems period,
And all combin'd in Beauties worthinesse,
Yet should there houer in their restlesse heads
One thought, one grace, one woonder, at the least,
Which into words, no vertue can digest.

Nor is Faustus far different. With him the passion takes the form of a desire to conquer the secret force of nature, but his words have the same glow of enthusiastic rapture:

O what a world of profite and delight,
Of power, of honour, and omnipotence,
Is promised to the Studious Artizan?
All things that moue betweene the quiet Poles
Shall be at my command: Emperors and Kings,
Are but obey'd in their seuerall Prouinces:
But his dominion that exceeds in this,
Stretcheth as farre as doth the mind of man:
A sound Magitian is a Demi-god,
Here tire my braines to get a Deity.

Marlowe is the poet of passion *par excellence*, and nowhere does he show his genius for high, astounding phrases so much as he does when he is speaking of the rapture of beauty. His verses take on a strange iridescence where the marvelling at the loveliness becomes confused with the rich sound of words loved for their own sake. This is especially true of Tamburlaine's cry over the dying Zenocrate:

Blacke is the beautie of the brightest day,
The Golden Ball of heauens eternall fire,
That daunc'd with glory on the siluer waues,
Now wants the fewell that enflam'd his beames,
And all with faintnesse, and for foule disgrace,
He binds his temples with a frowning cloud,

Readie to darken earth with endlesse night,
Zenocrate that gaue him light and life,
Whose eyes shot fire from their Iuorie bowers,
And tempered euery soule with liuely heat.
Now by the mallice of the angrie skies,
Whose Iealousie admits no second mate,
Drawes in the comfort of her latest breath,
Al dasled with the hellish mystes of death.
Now walke the angels on the walles of heauen,
as Centinels to warne th' immortall soules,
To entertaine diuine *Zenocrate*.
Apollo, Cynthia, and the ceaselesse lamps,
That gently lookt vpon the loathsome earth,
Shine downwards now no more, but deck the heauens,
To entertaine diuine *Zenocrate*.
The Christall springs whose taste illuminates,
Refined eyes with an eternall sight,
[illegible]
That sing and play before the King of Kings,
Vse all their voyces and their instruments
[illegible]
Holds out his hand in highest maiestie
To entertaine diuine *Zenocrate*.

It is equally true of Faustus' still better-known eulogy of Helen:

Was this the face that Launcht a thousand ships
And burnt the toplesse Towers of *Ilium*?
Sweet *Hellen* make me immortall with a kisse:
Her lips sucke forth my soule, see where it flies.
[illegible]
I will be *Paris*, and for loue of thee,
Instead of *Troy* shall *Wittenberg* be sack't,
And I will combat with weake *Menelaus*,
And weare thy colours on my plumed crest,
Yea, I will wound *Achilles* in the heele,
And then returne to *Hellen* for a kisse
[illegible]

When he appear'd to haplesse *Semele*:
More louely then the Monarch of the sky,
In wanton *Arethusa's* azure armes,
And none but thou shalt be my Paramour.

Before passing to glance at some of those dramatic elements wherein Marlowe proved his inferiority to Shakespeare, it were well to mark the great scene in *Dr Faustus* which, more than anything else, points out Marlowe's true greatness. All previous dramas, including *Tamburlaine*, had dealt with single-minded individuals. If a struggle in the heart of a hero was introduced, that struggle normally took the form which is to be seen in the morality plays—the struggle being symbolized by conflicting bodies of minor characters. In *Dr Faustus* Marlowe attempted something new—the delineation of a struggle within the mind of the chief figure. This struggle is certainly somewhat primitive in its expression, but it is a foretaste of those "inward characteristics" toward which, as Professor Vaughan has pointed out, drama in its development inevitably tends. Faustus, in this respect, is unquestionably the greatest tragic figure in sixteenth-century literature outside the work of Shakespeare.

However great Marlowe proved himself in poetry, he was, nevertheless, not a Shakespeare. He never quite succeeded in reaching the loftiest summits of tragic art, and this perhaps was more owing to certain features in his own character than to the fact that he died young. In structure we see that all these three plays are faulty. *Dr Faustus* and *The Jew of Malta* have assuredly come down to us in mutilated texts; but even their original form must have been weak. *Tamburlaine* has no unity except such as lies in the presence of the hero; *Dr Faustus* is largely a collection of heterogeneous scenes, loosely pinned together; *The Jew of Malta* opens well, but sinks into mediocrity toward the middle and close. With Marlowe we are in the presence of a distinctly passionate but unbalanced genius, a man lacking the serenity and the calm-eyed power which gave to Shakespeare a large part of his greatness. With his insistence upon the tremendous

emotions of these supermen heroes, Marlowe, moreover, tended to lose sight of the minor figures in his tragedies. All his heroes, by their very greatness, stand alone. We have the feeling that they have no mortal force to fight against. They are lonely figures in a world of Lilliputians. This may be, to a certain extent, a characteristic likewise of the Shakespearian tragedy, but always Shakespeare has given more of individuality to his lesser figures than has Marlowe. Horatio, Cassio, Banquo, and Kent have independent existence such as Meander and Wagner never could have. This want of relief is particularly to be noted in the almost complete lack of women in Marlowe's plays. Zenocrate plays but a shadowy part in *Tamburlaine*; Helen is but a vision in *Dr Faustus*; and Abigail hardly calls for our sympathy in *The Jew of Malta*. Again, while tragedy may be, in the main, masculine in character, this lack proves the circumscribed limits of Marlowe's art.

Never does he show the breadth and the vision which Shakespeare displays in the gravediggers of *Hamlet* or the porter of *Macbeth*.

It is just possible, of course, that Marlowe would have flourished forth into a more comprehensive dramatist had his life been spared; and for this there is evidence in the play of *Edward II*. This obviously belongs to the chronicle-history tradition, and hence stands apart from the others. There are more human elements in it, although the *virtù* so noticeable in the earlier dramas makes its appearance here in the figure of Mortimer, who is opposed to the weak-

preceding plays. As Edward lies in the misery of his prison his words have a tragically pathetic note which seizes upon the imagination:

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More louely then the Monarch of the sky,
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And there in mire and puddle haue I stood,
This ten daies space, and least that I should sleepe,
One plaies continually vpon a Drum,
They giue me bread and water being a King,
So that for want of sleepe and sustenance,
My mindes distempered, and my bodies numde,
And whether I haue limmes or no I know not,
O would my blood dropt out from euery vaine,
As doth this water from my tattered robes:
Tell *Isabell* the Queene, I lookt not thus,
When for her sake I ran at tilt in France,
And there vnhorst the Duke of *Cleremont.*

Nothing quite like this had been known in the earlier chronicle histories. Hardly too much may be said of Marlowe as a poet, as a pioneer, as a genius of unquestioned individuality and independence both of thought and of feeling.

(iv) Kyd

If Marlowe was responsible for developing one type of tragedy Thomas Kyd is responsible for elaborating another. Of his works we possess the famous and notorious *The Spanish Tragedie* (*c.* 1589; printed without a date, and, with additions, in 1602), and *Cornelia* (unacted; printed 1594). In addition to these he has been credited with the authorship of an early *Hamlet*, which, however, recent research tends to attribute to Shakespeare himself. *Cornelia* hardly merits any close attention; its blank verse at times is fair, but it is after all only a translation of Robert Garnier's Senecan *Cornélie* (1574). *The Spanish Tragedy*, on the other hand, marks a distinct era in the development of English tragedy. This play was an instant success, capturing completely the hearts of the late sixteenth-century audiences, and retaining its popularity long into the seventeenth century. Its fame is attested to by allusion after allusion in the plays and the pamphlets of the time. This popularity, and the fact that it gave rise to a host of similar plays, including Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, makes it necessary to pause for a moment in order to gain an idea of those features in it which most affected the spectators of the time. The story is one of revenge. We are

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My mindes distempered, and my bodies numde,
And whether I haue limmes or no I know not,
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introduced in the first scene as the ghost of Andrea, the slain husband of Bellimperia. The heroine falls in love with Horatio, who is strangled by Lorenzo, Bellimperia's brother. Horatio's father, Hieronimo, avenges his murder by means of a play within the play, and then dies in his turn. It may be noted here that the passages which deal with the painter first found in the quarto of 1602 are not by Kyd, but were added, perhaps by Jonson, who was paid for "adicyons" to the play in 1601, or, as some have thought, by Webster. In discussing the value of the drama we must treat these scenes as separate from the original play. What is it that contemporaries saw in this piece? In the first place they found a Senecan play adapted to popular requirements. There is plenty of action upon the stage; there is an interest in it which the neo-classical dramas normally lack; and at the same time there is evidence in the authorship of a man who has studied the classical stage and learnt its most telling features. On the whole, the play is well constructed, and Seneca's ghosts and revenge themes have freely been borrowed from. Kyd, too, knew the tastes of the audience, and his tragedy is, like Shakespeare's plays, full of strong external action. The stage effects are well managed; the murders are thrillingly committed; and the whole work rises at the end to a climax of interest in the play scene. In some ways *The Spanish Tragedy* appealed to a Grand Guignol audience, and gave something too to those who still retained faith in classical drama. This able presentation of the story reveals the difference between Kyd and Marlowe. None of Marlowe's plays are well constructed; Kyd knows the theatre so well that he can make fullest use of all the opportunities it has to offer. Kyd, moreover, was a poet in his own way, and, without being able to rival Marlowe in writing the high, astounding line, he succeeds in producing dialogue that is forceful and capable, such as, for example, those words of Bellimperia and Balthazar at the opening of Act II, Scene 2:

> *Bel.* My hart (sweet freend) is like a ship at sea:
> She wisheth port, where riding all at ease
> She may repaire what stormie times haue worne,

And leaning on the shore may sing with ioy
That pleasure followes paine, and blisse annoy.
Possession of thy loue is th' onely port,
Wherein my hart, with feares and hopes long tost,
Each howre doth wish and long to make resort,
There to repaire the ioyes that it hath lost,
And, sitting safe, to sing in Cupid's Quire
The sweetest blisse is crowne of loues desire.

Bathazar and Lorenzo aboue.

Bal. O sleepe, mine eyes, see not my loue prophande;
Be deafe, my eares, heare not my discontent;
Dye, hart: another ioyes what thou deseruest.

Even these qualities, however, do not exhaust all the main features of Kyd's work. He had taken over the Senecan type as it appeared in *Gorboduc*; he had made it thrillingly effective; he had breathed into it the passion of fine blank verse; but he did something more than that. He contributed a new type of tragic hero to the stage. The main characters in tragedy up to his time had been "afflicted princes" or grandiloquent supermen; Kyd presented the hesitating type seen most magnificently in *Hamlet*, and allied that with madness, feigned and real. Hieronimo does not sweep to his revenge. He moves a step forward, hesitates, draws back, falls into a passion of indecision, and then completes his task. It was the subtlety of character delineation in Kyd's work which must most have appealed to the audiences of the time; they realized that here was something for which they had been seeking.

(v) Greene

The remaining pair of University Wits gave all their attention to the development of comedy. Robert Greene has left five plays: *The Comicall Historie of Alphonsus King of Aragon* (c. 1587; printed 1599), *A Looking Glasse for London and England* (written with Lodge c. 1590; printed 1594), *The Honorable Historie of frier Bacon, and frier Bongay* (c. 1589; printed 1594), *The Historie of Orlando Furioso* (c. 1591; printed 1594), and *The Scottish Historie of Iames the fourth, slaine at Flodden. Entermixed with*

a pleasant Comedie, presented by Oboram, King of Fayeries (*c.* 1591; printed 1598). The first two of these may be neglected here. *Alphonsus* is an amateur work and very reminiscent of *Tamburlaine*; the other play has already been glanced at briefly. *Orlando Furioso*, also, requires but scant attention. Its theme, taken from Ariosto, but highly embroidered with fanciful touches, and its treatment do not raise it above the ordinary levels of the time. In *Friar Bacon*, however, and in *James IV* Greene has, as many critics have realized, contributed much to the development of romantic comedy in England. Romance we have already seen gathering way in the morality-interlude type of drama; it is here by Greene raised to the true height of art. The plot of *Friar Bacon* is sad enough, with its complications and barren stretches, but out of it there emerge two or three notable features. The first and greatest is the love between Margaret and Lacy. The story of the play shows us Friar Bacon and Friar Bongay, or Bungay, rivalling each other in magic, and revealing, by means of a marvellous glass, events that are taking place elsewhere. This portion of the plot introduces the low comic character of Miles, Bacon's scholar, and a Devil, who runs off with the magician on his back. Alongside of these figures move Edward, Prince of Wales, and Lacy, Earl of Lincoln, both in love with Margaret, the keeper's daughter. We have thus three distinct worlds mingled together—the world of magic, the world of aristocratic life, and the world of the country. These, by his art, Greene has woven together into a single harmony, showing the way to Shakespeare when the latter came to write *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The cardinal feature of the romantic comedy is precisely this interweaving of [illegible] princes meet with cl[illegible] to the presentation of [illegible] The same atmosphere is to be discovered in *James IV*. Here the Kings of England and of Scotland, surrounded by a group of courtiers, meet in the same play with Bohan, a melancholy Scot, and Oboram, or Oberon, King of the Fairies. Here too is introduced a theme of romantic love,

with Dorothea, the best-drawn woman figure in sixteenth-century drama outside Shakespeare's comedies, as the heroine. The whole is fused into a unity by Greene's peculiar humour, cast over the entirety of the play. With Greene, then, we find even more fully elaborated that dramatic form in which realism and idealism meet, where elements apparently contradictory move in one common harmony.

The indebtedness of the drama to Greene is by no means confined to this presentation of romantic settings. His verse has a quality of its own not to be despised. Although normally it has a prevailingly iambic movement and is heavily influenced by the blank verse of Marlowe, Greene permits himself some liberties in his handling of it. We not only have lines which in their strength and beauty recall the melodies of Shakespeare, as in Margaret's words:

> Why thinks King *Henries* sonne that *Margrets* loue
> Hangs in the vncertain balance of proud time?

but we find scattered through his verses interesting variations from the iambic pentameter norm. Such a line as

> Poring vpon dark *Hecat's* principles

shows an interesting attempt to secure a variety rarely to be found in the more regular melodies of Greene's companions.

In characterization, too, Greene's contribution to the drama of his age is noteworthy. He is one of the first to draw the Rosalinds and Celias of Elizabethan times. Margaret and Dorothea are excellent portraits of women conceived and depicted in that romantic light which shone on so many works of this period. These women are real; yet they have some elements in them which seem ideal. Once more the two worlds meet. So, too, with Bohan of *James IV*, a character who seems the prototype of Jaques in *As You Like It*. There is in him at once realism and a certain touch of the romantic which makes him a fit if somewhat moody companion for Oberon.

(vi) Lyly

Finally we come to that poet who, in point of time, was the earliest of this group, John Lyly. More of his work has been preserved than of any of the others. His plays number eight in all: *A moste excellent Comedie of Alexander, Campaspe, and Diogenes* (1584), *Sapho and Phao* (1584), *Gallathea* (c. 1588; printed 1592), *Endimion, The Man in the Moone* (1588; printed 1591), *Midas* (1589–90; printed 1592), *Mother Bombie* (c. 1590; printed 1594), *Loves Metamorphosis* (c. 1590; printed 1601), and *The Woman in the Moone* (c. 1594; printed 1597). All of these are marked by similar features, features which serve to differentiate Lyly from the other University Wits. In the first place, unlike the rest, he looked to the Court for [illegible]

[illegible] in the first. As all Lyly's comedies, however, possess the same essential characteristics, it is unwise to consider the separate plays apart from the whole of his dramatic productivity.

It was Lyly who was largely responsible for the first elaboration of romantic sentiment. He found on the stage the abstractions of the moralities; he found also the crude comedy of realistic types. He found too the strict classical division of drama into particular forms—tragedy, comedy, and pastoral; and alongside of that he found the crude mingling of tragedy and of comedy as exemplified in the rough popular plays we have already considered. Deliberately he seems to have sought for some atmosphere

or for some method of treatment which might harmonize these apparently antagonistic spheres of interest, an atmosphere which is reflected in the humour and romantic fancy we have noted in the works of Peele and of Greene. This romantic fancy is with him more idealistic than it is with the other two men, and makes his plays move on a plane somewhat removed from terrestrial existence; but his importance as the inaugurator of this style cannot be overestimated. There is in his comedies a mellowed spirit under which seriousness and laughter meet, a world of poetic fancy wherein the deities of classical mythology live and move by the side of the human figures.

Separated as Lyly was from the neo-classicists in refusing to bow to the canon of sharply marked 'kinds' of dramatic poetry, he was at the same time thoroughly humanistic in his outlook. Terence taught him the technique which is displayed in his dramas, and the study of Greek myth led him into a strange realm with which but few Renascence artists were acquainted. The best way of estimating Lyly's mythological pictures is by comparing him with Botticelli. In both we find the classic age seen through the eyes of romance. In both there are delicate colourings, a certain mellowed sadness, a linking of earth with the spirit world. Here are realism and classicism and romanticism welded into one.

In style Lyly's importance has long been appreciated by scholars, and the title of his early novel, *Euphues*, has contributed a special adjective to the terminology of literary types. In its most exaggerated form this euphuistic style is dull, monotonous, and uninteresting, wearying the reader with the endless antitheses, the continual flow of artificial metaphors; but this was what his age was seeking. It was at least artistic, in the broader sense of the word. For the first time, almost, men found a prose style which bore upon it the evident marks of conscious artistry. Instead of rough strength there is grace; instead of blundering periods there is a refinement of thought and of phrase. What Lyly did for comic prose dialogue may easily be seen from even the few following lines quoted from *Mother Bombie*:

Dromio. Now, if I could meete with *Risio*, it were a world of waggery.

Risio. Oh that it were my chance, *Obuiam dare Dromio*, to stumble vpon *Dromio*, on whome I doo nothing but dreame.

Dromio. His knauerie and my wit, should make our masters that are wise, fooles; their children that are fooles, beggers; and vs two that are bond, free.

Risio. He to cosin, & I to coniure, would make such alterations, that our masters should serue themselues; the ideots, their children, serue vs; and we to wake our wits betweene them all.

For the first time also men found a suitable blank verse for comedy. Marlowe's richness and bombast and glory was ill suited for the expressing of lighter sentiments, whereas Lyly's verse, delicate if artificial, could convey excellently the quickness of his thought and the humorous images constantly fleeting through his brain. This prose and this verse Lyly frequently mingled in his comedies, and the interweaving of the two corresponds to the two worlds of reality and of the ideal. The same fusion is to be discovered in *As You Like It*.

In his attempts at successful comic-character drawing Lyly made an important advance He shows certainly in some plays the excessive influence of Terence, but he frequently shakes himself free from the presentation of merely imitative 'humours.' There is no question but that in Dromio of *Mother Bombie*, in Stellio, Accidius, and Silena we have relics of the Latin stage, but none of these are quite pure types Each has a certain touch of individuality that removes the apparent artificiality of the character-drawing. Moreover, we find in Lyly the first hints of the union of 'humours' with romantic characteristics, or of the juxtaposition of 'humours' and of romantic types. In *Mother Bombie* this is to be seen in the rather charming figures of Mæstius and Serena, just as it is to be discovered in the lovers, Eumenides and Semele, of *Endimion*.

In studying Lyly's work it is important to remember that while, to a certain extent, he stands apart from the regular development of drama in his time, his influence was widespread. All men and women of culture started to converse in euphuistic style, and the commoners aped the

aristocrats. His comedies proved popular, and Shakespeare, among others, deigned to take from them many suggestions. The device of the girl dressed as a boy, which gave to us the figure of Rosalind, is to be traced back to Lyly. The introduction of songs symbolical of the movement or mood of a particular comedy owes its popularity to him. In countless ways, large and small, he contributed to the development of the theatre of his time.[1]

(vii) OTHER DRAMATISTS OF THE LATE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

In carrying the development of comedy and tragedy up to the close of the careers of the University Wits we have reached chronologically the nineties of the sixteenth century, and we have discovered certain main lines of dramatic development. In tragedy there has been noted (1) the Marlovian type, in which the hero is a superman, battling with the gods, (2) the *Spanish Tragedy* type of revenge play, and (3) the chronicle history of varying moods and atmospheres. With these moves the neo-classical tragedy, as exemplified in *Gorboduc*, but destined to take no large share in the growth of English drama, as well as odd plays, of which Peele's *David and Bethsabe* is one, with no very decided characteristics. In comedy we discover (1) the rude realistic farce deriving its inspiration from the interlude tradition, (2) the imitations of Terence and of Plautus, generally realistic in character, (3) the purely fanciful comedies written by Lyly, and (4) the romantic comedies of a realistic-ideal type inaugurated by Greene. These by no means exhaust all the forms of drama in the later years of the sixteenth century, but they may be

[1] It is important to remember that a true appreciation of Lyly's work cannot be gained until the principle of his stage methods is understood. Lyly, writing for the Court, adopted the 'simultaneous' method abandoned in the public theatres, whereby several distinct localities appeared on the stage at once. In *Mother Bombie*, for example, there are seven doors, each representing a separate locality. In *Campaspe* there are three localities on the stage—Alexander's house, Diogenes' tub, and Apelles' shop. This simultaneous setting was in use in the time of the mystery plays, and disappeared in England during the seventeenth century.

taken as guides in the further summary of tragic and comic endeavour.

In the meantime it may be well to glance briefly at a few independent plays, and at the work of one or two separate writers whose dramas are in some way to be associated with the activities of the University Wits. One of the most important of these plays is *The Lamentable and True Tragedy of M. Arden of Feversham in Kent* (c. 1590; printed 1592), the authorship of which was at one time given to Shakespeare, but is now usually accredited to Kyd or to one of his followers. *Arden of Feversham* introduces us to a new type of tragedy, the domestic type. Domestic tragedy of a sort is, of course, visible in some of the moralities. The presentation of Everyman (under whatever name he may pass) is essentially domestic, and the example of these primitive dramas was no doubt fostered by the popular nature of the English theatre and by the influence of Marlowe. The moving from royal themes to the world of ordinary life was indeed inevitable for the English stage, divorced in spirit from the fettering restraint of classical rules and precepts. *Arden of Feversham*, however, marks the first direct break with tradition, and that break takes two distinct lines. In the first place, there is a good deal of prose mingled with its blank verse, and the verse itself is as close to prose as the author could bring it. The whole atmosphere of the play, therefore, even apart from the realistic theme, is brought down from the loftier realms of the earlier tragedy. The theme itself is the second important feature. We are here presented not with a story of revenge carried on in the Courts of princes, not with the downfall of some imperial monarch, but with the somewhat sordid murder of a Mr Arden by his wife Alice. Nothing could have been more thoroughly shocking to an enthusiast for the classics, but we, looking back from the twentieth century, can see that herein lay one of the opportunities which the English drama had of freeing itself from external bonds, and of elaborating a perfectly novel type of tragic endeavour.

The work of one or two particular dramatists may also

be considered here, and first that of Anthony Munday (*c.* 1553–1633), a peculiarly shadowy figure, who is slowly coming to his own. Very little of his work is known, yet Meres in 1598 styled him one of "the best for comedy" and considered him "our best plotter." It is almost certain that his influence may be traced in many works which now pass under the names of others. Of his extant plays we have three in all: *John a Kent and John a Cumber* (manuscript with date "Decembris 1596," but performed *c.* 1594), *The Downfall of Robert, Earle of Huntingdon* (1598; printed 1601), and *The Death of Robert, Earle of Huntingdon* (1598; printed 1601; written with Chettle). In addition to these we know that he had a share in writing *Sir Thomas More*, and two plays—*Fedele and Fortunio* (*c.* 1584; printed 1585) and *The Weakest goeth to the Wall* (*c.* 1599; printed 1600)—have, the first with some evidence, the latter almost certainly erroneously, been attributed to him. The chief feature in the three known plays is the romantic atmosphere, and this has led certain modern critics to give to Munday probably more than his due share of praise as a forerunner of Shakespeare. *John a Kent* is indeed an interesting drama, presenting as it does a theme very similar to that given by Greene in *Friar Bacon*, and filled with the same romantic colouring. The two magicians, as in Greene's play, work for the loves of Sidanen and Marian, and this is intermingled with low-comedy episodes, in which appear one "Turnop with his Crewe of Clownes" not unsuggestive of Bottom and the artisans of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The two parts of *Robert, Earl of Huntingdon* display the same passion for romance, and here we come to an interesting fusion of history and folklore. The endeavour to provide an historical background for the Robin Hood legends is of importance, and no doubt gave several ideas to Shakespeare when he came to write his history-comedies. With these plays might be noted two of a similar tone and atmosphere, *A Pleasant Conceyted Comedie of George a Greene, the Pinner of Wakefield* (*c.* 1592; printed 1599), and *A Pleasant Commodie, Called Looke aboute You* (*c.* 1598; printed 1600). The first of these has been

attributed to Greene, but it is more probable that some episodès in the play were based on that dramatist's life. The comedy is not well constructed, and verges, as do many plays of the romantic type, upon the sentimental; but the introduction of folk-elements with the characters of Robin Hood, Maid Marian, and George a Greene gives it a lasting interest. From the difference in style between the Robin Hood and the Earl of Kendal portions it seems as if a primitive Robin Hood play had here been worked up with pseudo-historical material and the utilization of some gossip concerning the University Wit. *Look about You* shows a similar mingling of history and folklore, with an additional element of realism. In many diverse ways the path was being opened up for Shakespeare.

With Munday is to be associated Henry Chettle, who, like his companion, wrote many plays (most of them now lost) in collaboration with others for old Henslowe. The only play of his own which has been preserved is *The Tragedy of Hoffman or A Reuenge for a Father* (c. 1602; printed 1631). This tragedy is well written, many of the scenes being couched in a vivid dialogue hard to forget, but the heaping of murder upon murder prevents the play rising above melodrama. The conception of Hoffman, however, ferociously intent upon executing wild vengeance on the slayers of his father, and himself brought to ruin by the *ἁμαρτία* of his love for Otho's mother, shows that Chettle had some idea of the true nature of tragedy. A somewhat similar tragedy is that of *Alphonsus Emperour of Germany*, not printed till 1654, but probably dating back to the nineties of the sixteenth century. On the title-page of the only quarto it is attributed to Chapman, but this most modern critics are inclined to reject; the Stationers' Register entry of 1653 gives it to one John Peele, and probably because of this Kirkman ascribed it to George Peele. The drama shows well the crude revenge motives beloved by the audiences of the time, added to pseudo-historical interest. Alphonsus is a monster of vice. In the first scene he poisons his Machiavellian secretary, Lorenzo de Cyprus, and hints to the latter's son, Alexander, that the

true murderers are to be sought in the Electors of th
German Empire. By this means he uses the youth as
tool to further his projects. An attempt on the life o
Richard, Duke of Cornwall, fails, but the King of Bohemia
is successfully poisoned. Hedewick, the daughter of the
Duke of Saxon, and the bride of Edward, Prince of Wales,
is ravished; her father stabs her, believing her unfaithful.
One after another the enemies fall, until in the end Alphonsus
in a moment of fear confesses his crimes to Alexander.
The latter makes him deny God and then stabs him to the
heart. Here the elements of the horror tragedy are inter-
mingled with the revenge themes popularized by Kyd.[1]

The work of the other writers of this time may for the
most part be neglected. William Haughton, John Day,
Henry Porter, Robert Wilson, and Samuel Rowley all
left capably written dramas behind them; but none set
his seal upon the dramatic activity of the age. *English-
Men for my Money: or, A pleasant Comedy, called, A
Woman will haue her Will* (1598; printed 1616), by the
first named, is a bright comedy of realistic tendencies, and
the same author's *Grim the Collier of Croyden; Or, The
Devil and his Dame* (1600; printed 1662 as by "I. T.") is a
variant of the usual mixtures of realism, history, romance,
and magic. Even more intrinsically interesting than these
is Day's *Humour out of Breath* (1608): here the character of
Florimel gives life to a plot of the romantic type and
recalls once more the witty maidens of Shakespeare's fancy.
Day's work extends well into the seventeenth century;
but Henry Porter's only extant play, *The Pleasant Historie
of the two angrie women of Abington* (c. 1597; printed 1599),
is of the period we are discussing. This comedy has decided
value because of the intense realism of the subject, and
shows Porter in one way a predecessor of Jonson in the
realm of satiric comedy. Robert Wilson belongs to an
older and a different tradition. His *right excellent and
famous Comœdy called the three Ladies of London* (c. 1581;
printed 1584) and *The Pleasant and Stately Morall, of the*

[1] This play is interesting also because of the fact that many scenes are
written in quite passable German.

three Lordes and three Ladies of London (*c.* 1589; printed 1590) are quite clearly based on the older morality tradition, and the realistic humour in them is but a further elaboration of similar realistic scenes in the early sixteenth-century plays we have already glanced at. Samuel Rowley is a more shadowy figure still. His one independent play is *When you see me, You know me. Or the famous Chronicle Historie of King Henry the eight* (*c.* 1603; printed 1605), but we are aware of his additions to *Dr Faustus*, and his authorship of several later plays is known from records of Sir Henry Herbert. The strength and virility of his acknowledged work is remarkable; and from this Mr H. Dugdale Sykes has argued that Rowley is the main author of *The Famous Victories*, of the prose scenes in *The Taming of A Shrew*, of certain passages in *Orlando Furioso* and others in *Wily Beguiled*. The correspondence between mannerisms to be found in these plays renders the attribution to Rowley highly probable.[1]

Many lesser plays have here been deliberately omitted. An outline history such as this is cannot hope to do more than mention broad tendencies with a few selected concrete examples; and enough has been said perhaps to show the chief lines upon which drama was developing in the last years of the sixteenth century. The audience was manly, heroic, and broadminded; and accordingly we find the development of hardier features than are to be discovered in the later drama. At the same time, crudity in the presentment of tragic themes and vulgarity in many of the comic episodes existed by the side of high thinking and of beautiful romantic poetry. A thoroughly popular theatre will always produce these mingled elements of rich artistry and of roughness; there will always be in such a theatre a certain lack of refinement. On the other hand, there will usually be strength and hope and courage; there will be the freshness arising from breadth of outlook and of appeal. It must be our object in the following chapter to trace the rise of this early drama to a culmination in the

[1] For a criticism of Mr Sykes' theory see W. W. Greg's *Two Elizabethan Stage Abridgements* (1922), pp. 358–60.

hands of Shakespeare, and then to watch the gradual decline of the manlier elements as Court corruption laid its palsied hand upon the keen virility of the sixteenth-century theatre. In doing this, it will be necessary, first of all, to glance at the historical conditions governing the playhouses, and then to follow the fortunes of several of the most notable dramatic types. The analysis of seventeenth-century theatrical endeavour under the works of particular writers can end only in a certain confusion, for convention ruled, and the independence of the earlier drama soon gave way to a set of more or less stereotyped fashions in the theatres.

PART II

THE ELIZABETHAN, JACOBEAN, AND CAROLINE DRAMA

CHAPTER I

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PERIOD THE AUDIENCES AND THE THEATRES

Historical Survey

THE seventeenth century, with the earlier portion of which this chapter will deal, is possibly the most marvellous epoch England has ever witnessed. There is Anglo-Saxon literature from the seventh to the tenth centuries. There are Chaucer and Langland and the unidentified author of *Gawayn and the Green Knight* in the fourteenth. There are Spenser and the University Wits in the sixteenth. All of these are of great intrinsic importance; but no one single century has seen such a florescence of artistic genius as appears in the works of Shakespeare, Chapman, Dekker, Jonson, Massinger, Middleton, Webster, Ford, and Shirley, to mention only a few of those who made the theatre glorious from 1600 to 1642. Hardly any century, moreover, displays such a variety of diverse moods and tendencies. This period which stretches from the last days of Elizabeth to the time of William and Mary shows not only the best work of Shakespeare and his [illegible] with the establishment of correct and careful neo-classicism. At one end it knew Shakespeare; at the other it knew Swift.

Between Shakespeare and Swift is a deep chasm, at first

sight apparently without a solitary point of connexion between the one bank and the other. On closer view, however, it is seen that this chasm is bridged by innumerable links in a continued chain of development. There is, certainly, a chronological break toward the middle of the century in the Puritan domination, which extended from 1642 to 1660. Nevertheless, even this chronological break, serious as it appears, will be found to have exercised comparatively slight influence on the development of literature. There are Puritan elements to be discovered in the early Caroline drama, just as there are Cavalier elements to be traced in the Puritanism of Milton. Too strict an attention to chronology, indeed, may well lead toward a false conception of seventeenth-century literature, particularly of literature expressed through the medium of drama. A true realization of the development of artistic purposes in this epoch can be obtained only when the more precise data supplied by an historical study of the period are put aside, and tendencies, movements, modes of thought, are put in their stead. Perhaps no better method of delineating these tendencies and movements could be found than that which may be called the division by temperament. If we take the Elizabethan spirit, as exemplified in the works and lives of Spenser, Sidney, Raleigh, Drake, and Shakespeare, as an entity by itself, we find that the Cavalier spirit expressed by Fletcher and Ford and Shirley is no less independent, and that the differences between the two serve to provide a point of view from which we may regard the literary activity of each. The Puritan temperament follows, shown clearly in Milton's later works and in Marvell's; and that is succeeded by the temperament of the Restoration, seen markedly enough in Rochester's lyrics and Etherege's comedies, and itself leading by infinite gradations toward the Augustan or neo-classic mood of slightly later years. Not one of these temperamental elements is confined to a certain set of years, but if we take these as guides we shall find that by their aid we shall be able to classify almost all, if not quite all, the writers and thinkers of the time.

The seventeenth century opened with the last years of

Elizabeth's reign. She had unified England. She had made her country one of the chief of European nations, the colossal defeat of the Armada having for that time dissipated fear of any foreign invasion of our shores. She had made herself, moreover, the head of a national Church. Her rule, if strict against Catholics and Puritans who were in any way adverse to her system of government, was, it may be said, accepted by all. She was vain; she was artificial; but she was a diplomat, and she was the symbol of England. The poets who sang to her those praises which she so loved to hear were in reality singing the praises of Albion.

Elizabeth died in 1603, and James VI of Scotland hurried down to accept her throne, altering his title to James I. He was thoroughly unlike the preceding monarch, and in his reign there developed certain tendencies, partly due to his own management of State affairs, which were destined to be of extreme consequence before many decades had passed. The first and most important concerned the question of divine right. Elizabeth had been supreme, but she had always known when to give way. James assumed her place with far more exalted ideas of kingly power, bringing from Scotland all that fantastic philosophy which concerned the rights of kinghood and which was destined to bring more than one monarch of the house of Stuart to an untimely end. James, however, was almost the last person in the world fitted to keep up this *rôle* of flawless divinity. He had been gifted by nature with a clever but muddling brain. He was by way of being a pedant, acute and yet intensely foolish. Without real ability in kingship, without courage, without imperial grace, he tried to work with his wits to consolidate and establish that *position for which he yearned. With him, then, in England* grew up this new doctrine that kings could do no ill; with him too grew up that courtly body of men, less independent than the Drakes and Raleighs of a former period, who were to become the Cavaliers of the age of Charles I. With James's abrupt cessation from all foreign wars the broad free air that had informed the life and literature of

Elizabeth's reign began to vanish. Literature and life grew artificial, courtly, more luxuriant, more immoral, more insidious, and yet, in their own way, more gorgeous. The bare simplicity and noble tone of the Shakespearian tragedy degenerated into the florid beauties of Webster and Ford; the charm of *As You Like It* sank into the heated atmosphere of *A King and No King*.

In all history reactions are inevitably to be traced when any marked philosophy of life or tendency of government makes its appearance, and the reaction to this new spirit is to be seen in the rise of democratic Puritan sentiment. The Commons had been restive in Elizabeth's time, and this restiveness had nearly broken out into active rebellion in the year 1601. Only Elizabeth's diplomacy had, on that occasion, saved the country from disruption. In James's reign the dissatisfaction on the part of the Puritans became much more intense. They regarded his theory of the divine right of kings as a direct attack upon their political liberty. They looked with undisguised abhorrence upon his High Church ideas, seeing in them tendencies inimical to the reformed religion. They despised his Court as a place of infamy, alien to all good morals. The absence of foreign wars fostered internal dissension; more and more men turned to the question of domestic politics, so that, as we watch the progress of history immediately after the old Queen's death, we can see the rift gradually widening—the Puritans becoming increasingly severe, the Court rioting it in gayer splendour, in more wanton festivities, in more ornate religion.

James was just sufficiently clever and died just sufficiently soon to avoid any serious trouble with his subjects; but he left a serious legacy to his son, Charles. The latter, wholly unlike his father, was a gentleman, handsome, debonair, and artistically inclined. More and more he strengthened the Cavalier tradition, gathering round himself men of similar temperaments and kindred aspirations. In spite of his divine-right theories, his religion, and his artistic leanings he might well have made an ideal king for the moment. It is highly possible that, but for one

failing, his manners and his appearance would have won the hearts of all but the most soured Puritans. That one failing proved his utter undoing. He was completely unscrupulous in regard to political matters, and when we add this to the facts that his queen was a Catholic and that he himself was lenient to Catholics we realize that the struggle which had been slowly becoming more and more bitter in the time of James was bound to break out in deadly earnest. All through his reign he struggled, committing mad and perfidious act after mad and perfidious act. In Wentworth and in Laud he surrounded himself with evil counsellors, alienating thus even those men who [illegible] He struggled [illegible] but eventually [illegible] ggled in Scotland, raising there a hornet's nest which was doomed to bring about his ruin. By 1642 the tide was full; the Civil War broke out, bringing victory to the Puritans; in 1649 Charles himself went to the scaffold. The Puritan *régime* meant a rule of iron in England. The playhouses were officially closed. All sort of merriment ceased. The wan, steel-set faces of the Commonwealthmen turned from all gaiety, innocent and sinful, as a snare of the Evil One. The spirit of 'Merrie England,' however, could never be stifled in this wise, and murmurs of discontent are to be heard even before the death of Oliver Cromwell, so that it was but natural that the reaction to the reaction should appear in the short-lived rule of his son, Richard.

Charles II was recalled. For all those years he had been living, an exile, with his devoted band of Cavaliers. From one country to another he had passed in idleness, wasting his energies in drunkenness and wanton festivity. With his return the reaction to Puritan severity met with the abandon of these travelled Cavaliers, and all licence was permitted. The playhouses were thrown open; immorality was opposed to the morality of the preceding years; gaiety took the place of sadness and solemnity; careless abandon was substituted for restraint. The Restoration temperament, if so it may be called, endured for many

years. With the Revolution of 1688 and the gradual consolidation of anti-Catholic power there came toward the end of the seventeenth century a certain change, manifested in life by a conventional morality and a soberness of demeanour, in literature by the forging of neo-classic precept and example.

So the tale goes on, movement succeeding movement, and reaction succeeding reaction. This rapid survey of the historical background against which the literature is revealed may help to throw into relief not only the main elements going to make up the separate moods of the time, but also the continuity of tradition, a continuity of tradition which, in spite of all classifications, must be observed in the drama of the period. One example here may be sufficient. Beaumont the Elizabethan joins with Fletcher the Cavalier, and between them they invent a new romantic drama, itself based on Shakespeare's earlier romantic comedies. Shakespeare is influenced and writes *Cymbeline, The Tempest*, and *The Winter's Tale.* Shirley a decade or so later feels the impress of the fresh style, and along with Shirley stands D'Avenant. D'Avenant becomes one of the chief figures in the development of early Restoration drama and hands on the tradition to Dryden and to the Earl of Orrery, with whom the romantic drama takes form as the heroic tragedy. This heroic tragedy mingles with the later blank-verse tragedy of 1679–1700 and is carried on into the eighteenth century. Thus are the movements of the time to be traced.

(ii) The Theatre

Before coming to an actual examination of the plays of the period covered by the years 1600 to 1642 it is necessary, in addition to the brief summary of the historical background, to make an analysis of the main tendencies in the theatre and the audience. It is impossible, of course, to assume the existence of one set form of theatre or of one established type of audience during these forty years; on the contrary, it is necessary here to trace the changes which



DESIGN BY INIGO JONES FOR HABINGTON'S "THE QUEENE OF ARRAGON" 106

CXXX.

Ludus Scenicus.



A Stage-Play.

confined to the 'private' type of playhouse. Thus in 1637 Sir John Suckling provides suits and scenes to the value of £300 for a production of his *Aglaura* at Blackfriars; the same year Nabbes' *Microcosmus* was performed at Salisbury Court with scenery specially supplied; and three years later, in 1640, the then Lord Chamberlain defrayed the cost of the costumes and scenes for Habington's *The Queene of Arragon*, presented at Blackfriars. This tendency toward the greater use of the 'private' theatre and the corresponding tendency toward the utilization of scenery must be taken into account when we study the dramatic activity of the period.

Perhaps, too, we can trace an even greater employment of stage spectacle than was apparent in sixteenth-century dramas. Dumb shows, processions, and suchlike had been well favoured in the days of the University Wits, but they become even commoner in the seventeenth century. In Massinger and Dekker's *The Virgin Martyr* Sempronius enters "at the head of the Guard, soldiers leading three Kings bound."[1] A stage direction in Act II, Scene 1, of Massinger's *The Fatal Dowry* reads "Solemn Music. Enter the Funeral Procession," and in Act II, Scene 3, of the same play we find "Hautboys. Here a passage over the stage, while the Act is playing for the marriage of *Charalois* with *Beaumelle*." Middleton's *The Mayor of Quinborough* has many dumb shows, as has even such a comedy as Heywood's *The Fair Maid of the West*. So frequent did these become that the prologue to the latter's *The English Traveller* declares that play to be strange because there was

> *No Drum, nor Trumpet, nor Dumbe show;*
> *No Combate, Marriage, not so much to day*
> *As Song, Dance, Masque, to bumbaste out a Play.*

These dumb shows, of course, as in *The Fair Maid of the West*, were utilized to explain dramatic events too lengthy or too tedious to put on the stage. For this purpose, the old Chorus, which Shakespeare had employed,

[1] Act I, Scene 1.

CXXX.

Ludus Scenicus.



A Stage-Play.

In

was made use of, as in *The Mayor of Quinborough* or as in *The Fair Maid of the West*, where Heywood apologizes:

> Our Stage so lamely can expresse a Sea,
> That we are forst by *Chorus* to discourse
> What should have beene in action.

... of the stage remained almost unchanged. ... sometimes[1]

... exquisite effect ... *The Roman Actor* with exquisite effect. ... *Hamlet* had itself been borrowed from an older tradition ... the convention. So, too, the old ... boards. Still ... evice may have ... parts ...

... endencies of the ... the introduction ... gn to the charm of *As You Like It*. Secondly, it helped toward pathetic situation, as in Beaumont and Fletcher's *The Maid's Tragedy*, where Aspatia dresses as a boy and allows herself to be killed by the lover who had rejected her. Thirdly, it assisted the dramatists in their constant search after ... *The Widow* ... in boy's ... Philippa, who, in order to hide this youth from her husband, re-dresses Martia as a girl. Still further to cheat her husband she permits Martia to go through a ceremony of marriage with Francisco. In the end the girl's identity is revealed. In a similar manner, the 2nd Luce in Heywood's *The Wise Woman of Hogsdon* is paired off with Young Chartley. Immorality or indelicacy, pathos, and the straining after

[1] French actresses made an appearance in London about 1625, but were hissed out of the town.

[2] It appears, of course, in *Cymbeline*.

novelty will be found to be three of the chief characteristics of Jacobean and Caroline literature.

The theatre, however, does not display to us so clearly the changes that were coming over the age as does the audience. Gradually, year by year, the playhouses became the haunts of the courtiers. With the rift that was ever widening between the followers of the King and the Puritans, the former indulged in still greater amusement, the latter refrained from those things patronized by the Cavaliers. Steadily the citizens left off attending the theatre, so that the audiences were made up mainly of the courtiers and Cavaliers, along with a sprinkling of the riff-raff of men and women who won their livelihood by pleasure and gambling. No longer did the theatre express the feelings of the people of England; it was rapidly becoming the exclusive property of an aristocratic clique. The dramatists found as year succeeded year that they had to write for a new taste; more and more they looked to the Court.

(iii) The Reflection of Contemporary Conditions in the Drama

This new taste and its consequent effects upon the dramatic literature of the time had various results, and it may be well here to summarize briefly such as seem to be most exemplified in the typical dramas of the early seventeenth century.

We note, first of all, a certain new criticism, a more refined judgment of dramatic methods, leading ultimately toward a better technique. After 1600 the old chronicle history disappears. A few writers, such as Shakespeare, who had been brought up on the older traditions, might still retain some of its forms, but fundamentally it was replaced by something new. It cannot be regarded as a mere coincidence that Ben Jonson with his neo-classicism made his appearance just on the brink of the new century. His style, independent and individual as it seems, was in accord with the spirit of the age. In comedy Spanish intrigue, with the complicated plots always associated with

horror upon horror in the best approved manner, so that a tragedy like *Titus Andronicus* became one long tale of terror and torment; but in the seventeenth century we note an increased love of thrills, not necessarily throughout the whole play, but in stress-positions within the play. Thus many of the dramatists seemed to find a difficulty over their last acts. Commonly in their dramas a great crisis comes at the end of Act IV, only to be paralleled by another at the close of the drama. In Fletcher's *Valentinian* Æcius and Pontius commit suicide at the end of Act IV, Valentinian is poisoned in Act V, Scene 2, and Maximius dies at the conclusion of the play. Massinger's *The Roman Actor* has the thrilling death of Paris at the close of Act IV and the death of Cæsar at the close of Act V. *The Virgin Martyr* of Massinger and Dekker shows us the murder of Calista and Christeta in the midst of Act III, the martyrdom of Dorothea and the death of Antoninus at the end of Act IV, the torture and death of Theophilus at the close of Act V. All through these plays the dramatists attempt to fire the audience with suspense; they construct their tragedies on the plan of a series of exciting episodes, and constantly employ theatrical devices, both good and bad, for the purpose of arousing attention. The horrors, the poisoned pictures, the drinking-cups made out of skulls, those devices made so familiar by Webster and Ford and Tourneur, are all manifestations of this aim. Fletcher's *Valentinian* and Heywood's *The Rape of Lucrece* are founded on abductions. Torture is presented on the stage in the first of these, as it is also in *The Virgin Martyr*, where Dorothea is beheaded *coram populo*. In Middleton's *The Witch* a wife is made by her husband to drink his health out of her father's skull.

Not always, however, did the spectators desire to go away with final horrors in their minds, and hence we find, alongside of this tragedy of torment, the arising of a peculiar form of tragi-comedy typical of this age. In this form of tragi-comedy torment and horror hover in the air, but are finally dispelled by an artificial close. *The Witch*, mentioned immediately above, is a marked instance of this. The ghastly fancies of the husband lead the wife to attempts

at [illegible] that [illegible] same he [illegible] llery, aut [illegible] is suddenly and artificially struck with repentance and retires. So in *The Spanish Gipsy*, by Middleton and Rowley, Roderigo, who has violated Clara, has a sudden attack of conscience and marries her This weak tragicomedy obviously generates false psychology and [illegible] construction. Its many evil influences must be [illegible] borne in mind while we note the improved [illegible] the seventeenth-century dramatists.

The debility which was thus creeping upon the age exemplified by both the last-mentioned tendencies, is [illegible] apparent in the interest which dramatists and spectators took in [illegible] probably the best-known [illegible] he by no means [illegible] [illegible] *Women* [illegible] [illegible] many plays, such as Beaumont and [illegible] *and No King*, treat the [illegible] last-mentioned drama the [illegible] because of the love of the [illegible] Panthea. Tragedy is [illegible] that Arbaces is [illegible] not his sister [illegible] passionate and [illegible] of the [illegible] at; and all [illegible] thrilling episodes [illegible] may be.

By the side of this [illegible] apparent in the [illegible] increasing love of [illegible] mentalism. Only a few [illegible] Heywood [illegible] pictures of [illegible] and [illegible] does not by any [illegible] The richer sentimentalism of the [illegible]

into being in the midst of a hard-drinking, sensual age, just as this of the seventeenth century rose alongside the illicit loves of the Fordian drama and the coarse imaginings of Killigrew. Middleton's *The Roaring Girl* is thus full of sentiment. Moll is made impossible, because the authors were striving to present a wholly idealized view of her character. The duel in Middleton and Rowley's *A Fair Quarrel* is exactly in the style of Steele a century later. The noble-minded bandits in Massinger's *The Guardian* remind us of the similarly magnanimous vagabonds of late eighteenth-century dramas of sensibility. This sentimentalism, be it noted, frequently takes two forms. In one way it may be regarded as the genuine attempt of the humaner dramatists to stem the current of immorality, callousness, and corruption; in another as the merest pandering to an audience intent upon novelty, and eager to accept anything which might serve to whet their jaded appetites. Along with sentimentalism always goes pathos, that strange emotion ever to be appreciated yet exceedingly difficult to define accurately. Pathos, it may be said, is the weaker form of the tragic. The latter is heroic, leaving in the heart something inexplicable that is above tears. Pathos is always tear-compelling, and arouses a mood weaker and less noble than that majesty and awe associated with the highest tragedy. It must, of course, be realized not only that there are two forms of pathos, but that pathos may play an important and vital part in the greatest forms of tragedy. The scene when Lear wakens to discover Cordelia bending over him is indescribably pathetic, yet the whole of *King Lear* breathes the spirit not of pathos, but of terrible majesty. The pathos in only too many Jacobean and Caroline dramas is spread over all the scenes and all the characters. The true form of pathos may, at times, come near to the highest tragic expression, as in Massinger and Field's *The Fatal Dowry* or in Heywood's *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, but that form of the mood usually to be discovered in this period is the false and the artificial. The dramatists employ every means, illegitimate as well as legitimate, to stir the emotions of the spectators

and to present before them something of novelty. So we find the wholly false pity summoned forth by Ford and the painful attempts at pathetic situation made by Shirley and even by Webster. The old heroic atmosphere visible in *Othello* is hard to discover in the tragedies produced between 1610 and 1642.

With this debility goes a certain weakness in the power of characterization—another feature due to the desires of the spectators. More and more situation was being relied on rather than character, and the emphasis upon situation, added to the artificial changes of mood made necessary by the treatment of the dramas of the time, removed altogether the possibility of securing such finely developed individual figures as appear in earlier plays. In comedy Ben Jonson popularized the 'humours,' stock figures of no definite personality. In tragedy we meet with hardly anything save the regular, conventionalized stock types. The headstrong monarch is a favourite character of this sort, exemplified by Arbaces in Beaumont and Fletcher's *A King and No King* and by Dioclesian in Massinger and Dekker's *The Virgin Martyr.* The lustful tyrant is another; he appears in Fletcher's *Valentinian* and *The Maid's Tragedy*, and in Massinger's *The Roman Actor*. In these tragedies, too, there is always a predetermined hero, often a husband, and with him the inevitable heroine, either sinning or sinned against. As a foil and confidant to the former we are usually presented with a faithful friend, who is most commonly outspoken, blunt, and sincere. Mardonius in *A King and No King*, Romont in *The Fatal Dowry*, Aretus in *Valentinian*, and Melantius in *The Maid's Tragedy* are all characters drawn after this set plan. Add to this the sudden and wholly [illegible]
of character wh[illegible]
we realize that [illegible]
depths of perso[illegible]

So, too, with the themes of the plays themselves. Artificiality and novelty came rapidly to count for more than anything else. Comedy for a time was saved because of the realistic settings, but even those were being

conventionalized through the influence of Spanish intrigue. As for tragedy, we find that ever more and more romantic plots came to be employed. There was a regular run on Roman plays, usually set in the time of the Empire; and an equally popular run on tragedies the scenes of which were set in the Courts of Renascence Italy. More important are the plays where for locality is selected some wholly impossible Sicily or Moldavia or kingdom of the East. The audience loved those scenes, because they spoke of an idealized realm not far apart from Arcadia; strength being lost, they could not bear to witness the tragedy of daily life.

These spectators, bound up in their own affairs, naturally desired, to a far greater extent than the Elizabethans, the introduction of politics into the theatre. Many of the plays of the time contain references to current events and to contemporary conditions. Most of the dramatists were servile *divino jure* royalists, and they delighted to flood their dramas with the most loyal of sentiments. A few, such as Chapman and Massinger, preserve an independence of judgment, but the majority follow the lines set down by Beaumont and Fletcher. In *The Maid's Tragedy*, for example, Amintor, hopelessly betrayed and wronged by his king, feels that there is no possibility for him of revenge. The populace were ridiculed on all sides, so that the stage increasingly divorced itself from the only audience that can make for a great national theatre—the people. Even a man like Massinger, vigorous as was his criticism of contemporary affairs, succumbed to the usual theories. He presents Dioclesian in *The Virgin Martyr* as acting wrongly, just as he presents Roberto in *The Maid of Honour*, but only on the advice of his evil counsellors. Probably, with sharper vision than the others, he saw the way affairs were tending, and desired to warn Charles against the Wentworths and the Lauds. Still, for him a king was enhaloed with a divine glory, and the ideas of the commonalty were anathema.

This political element which is to be traced most clearly in tragedy is paralleled by the rapid growth of satire in comedy. In the years before 1600 comedy had been

boisterous, as in *The Taming of the Shrew*, or idyllic, as in

or the reading public is confined to a small clique, wil always produce satire. In 1598 appeared the first extant work of Ben Jonson, and Jonson's comedy is essentially satiric. Henceforth, comedy was to take two main lines of development—the one satiric, and the other purely romantic. The latter borrowed from tragedy a great dea

ruption of the time. Comedy thus poured scorn on the Puritans. It attacked the 'roarers,' as in Middleton and Rowley's *A Fair Quarrel*. It hit out at the *nouveaux riches*, as in Massinger's *A City Madam*. It ridiculed the conceited fops, as in *The Maid of Honour*; the *milites gloriosi*, as in *Every Man in his Humour*; the University

The result was a considerable brightening of comedy, for dialect of any sort is an unfailing tool in the hands of the lighter dramatists. On the other hand, the lengthy use of an unknown, or approximately unknown, dialect will inevitably become wearisome; and its effect, moreover, will disappear as the centuries pass by. There is something of this monotony in Jonson's plays, felt even in spite of the genius and vivacity of the author; and when we turn to other comedies by less talented writers we see that a vast number of them may be read now only by particular students of the period, and then not without the assistance of a body of explanatory notes. A complementary development is to be witnessed likewise in the verse of the more serious dramatists. Shakespeare's blank verse was always the blank verse of a poet. He was often obscure, always lyrical, always impassioned. In contrast to this type of dramatic dialogue, which Shakespeare shared with, or inherited from, the writers of the sixteenth century, we may place the blank verse of Fletcher and his companions. With the exception of a few writers, of whom Ford is the chief, we find that there are practically no dramatists of the later period who utilize this lyrical utterance. The Restoration critics were right when they declared that Beaumont and Fletcher wrote a courtly language—wrote, that is to say, as courtiers might speak. The verse of tragedy and of tragi-comedy lost its distinctively poetic rhythm. It abandoned, to employ Symonds' metaphor, the pitch of poetry. The consequence is that if we read the dialogue of any of these plays, we seem to be listening to the extremely elegant words of a fine speaker, not to the rhapsodies of a poet.

If we bear in mind these various aspects of early seventeenth-century drama we shall have gone far toward diagnosing the whole of the theatrical activity of the time. Individually diverse as the playwrights were, they formed, as Schlegel realized, a 'school,' so that the works of any one member of that school are much nearer to the works of any other member than to the works of a writer living before 1600 or after 1660.

(iv) The Main Types of Drama, 1600–42

Most of the chief tendencies of the dramatic literature of these forty years have been outlined above, but the scattered references may here be gathered together and summarized afresh. To this period belong the greatest works of Shakespeare's genius. His only true tragedy before 1600, if we except the history plays, was *Romeo and Juliet*, admittedly a youthful effort. Only after 1600 did he write *Hamlet*, *Lear*, *Othello*, and *Macbeth*, along with the series of Roman plays, *Julius Cæsar*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *Coriolanus*. The Shakespearian tragedy, [illegible] of the principal forms [illegible] ver, be recognized that [illegible] ly by any other writer. Many caught echoes of his language; several copied his characters; a few boldly imitated scenes in his plays; but there was no one who captured the tremendous spirit of his efforts in tragedy. Shakespeare, after all, was an Elizabethan, and the age was passing beyond the mood of earlier times. The horror tragedy, particularly of the [illegible] serious drama during this epo[illegible] them, on the other hand, are [illegible] ments in domestic drama. A [illegible] way, and Heywood gave the seal of artistic perfection to the type in *The English Traveller* and *A Woman Killed with Kindness*. The domestic drama, however, was never very popular, and died away until it was revived again in the eighteenth century.

In comedy similar movements are traceable. The tragi-comedy of a romantic cast had its unquestionable influence on the minds of the comic dramatists, and Spanish intrigue came to usurp more and more attention. The Spanish drama was magnificently fitted to appeal to the ages of James and of Charles. Under Lope de Vega and Calderon it had won a supreme place in the world of art.

More and more the Court was looking to Spain, as the old feeling which had risen to white heat in the days of the Armada passed away. The Spanish comic theatre was distinguished by three characteristics: the romantic tone which frequently enveloped the more serious scenes; the insistence upon intrigue, or action, at the expense of the characters; and the air of aristocratic gallantry engendered in a strictly monarchist country amid conventions of a late stage of civilization. All three appealed to the English playwrights and spectators. Here they found the courtly air, the atmosphere of assignations and intrigues, the slight colouring of romantic sentiment, for which they pined. With Fletcher the Iberian comedy was popularized in England, and was destined to run its course well into the eighteenth century. The comedy of intrigue was sometimes realistic in character, more commonly of a fashionable artificiality. Realism was more definitely encouraged by Ben Jonson, who, with his comedy of humours, endeavoured to establish more correct standards in the London theatres. In many ways this realistic comedy may be related to the domestic tragedy of the *Arden of Feversham* type, for both aided in keeping some measure of common sense in the theatre. Romanticism and intrigue were rapidly leading toward exaggeration of effect and artificiality of psychological delineation; the realist movement did at least keep the eyes of the dramatists intent upon contemporary London and its characters.

Besides these main theatrical traditions, which constantly mingle one with another, there are, of course, to be traced many other peculiar forms of drama which may hardly be classified into distinct groups. The revenge play, as developed by Kyd in *The Spanish Tragedy*, had a successful career in the seventeenth century, but may be considered along with the horror tragedy. Several serious dramas by Massinger seem to stand in a class by themselves. Beaumont and Fletcher's *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* marks the development of a new form, the dramatic burlesque. A few attempts were made at classical tragedy. A minute examination of these independent plays will

serve to show the immense variety in the theatrical activity of the period; but for our purposes in this volume, in order to gain, as it were, a bird's-eye view of the chief developments in the drama from mystery play to modern tragedy and comedy, it is necessary to bear in mind the larger and more outstanding dramatic tendencies of the age.

CHAPTER II

ROMANTIC COMEDY AND ROMANTIC TRAGI-COMEDY

The Romantic Comedy of Shakespeare

OUR analysis of the development of drama has already covered the work of the interlude writers and of the University Wits. Chronologically this survey has carried us to the end of the sixteenth century, but so far nothing has been said of Shakespeare's endeavour in the world of dramatic art. It is imperative now to return to the eighties and nineties, when Marlowe, Greene, and Kyd flourished, in order to view the dramatic work of Shakespeare in those years.

The career of Shakespeare is so well known, so much attention has been paid to his own life and to the circumstances in which his plays were written, that little space need be taken here with mere matters of fact. His dramatic work started, as all critics are agreed, with *Love's Labour's Lost*, and from the date when this was produced up to 1600 he had written over half of his extant works. Of these dramas several are histories, some of this type being purely tragically conducted, as *Richard II* and *Richard III*, some mainly comically, as *Henry IV*. There is, besides, the single lyrical tragedy of his early years, *Romeo and Juliet*, one or two farcical or realistic comedies, *The Taming of the Shrew* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and, finally, the array of romantic comedies, including *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *As You Like It*, *Twelfth Night*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, and *The Merchant of Venice*. It is with the last group that we are concerned here. In writing these he was obviously influenced deeply by Peele, Greene, and Lyly. The precociousness of *Love's Labour's Lost* shows clearly the influence of the last; Rosalind is a child of Greene's

imagination as well as of Shakespeare's. The blank verse of all the dramas re-echoes melodies already devised by his University predecessors and contemporaries. There was no exaggeration in the accusation that the young Stratford actor was beautifying himself with their feathers.

All these comedies are bound together by a common bond of romantic treatment. Characters and scenes alike are viewed through magic casements which transform reality. The settings are all imaginative—an unhistorical France, Ephesus, Thebes, Arden, Illyria, and Venice—each one conceived in the glow of a strange and beautiful fancy. Yet all are related to real life. There are contemporary figures and contemporary fashions in *Love's Labour's Lost*; Bottom and his companions mingle with the fairies; Sir Toby Belch and Sir Andrew Aguecheek are companions of Viola and Olivia, Dogberry and Verges of Hero and Beatrice. This is the cardinal characteristic of Shakespeare's romantic world—the union of realism and fantasy. Any other writer, placing Titania and Bottom in such close juxtaposition, might well have failed to secure unity of form, and our purpose in analysing these romantic comedies must be to discover that secret whereby Shakespeare was enabled to introduce such apparently conflicting characters. This secret is to be discovered, it would seem, in that particular form of humour which dominates these plays as well as [illegible] is humour, a union [illegible] the character an[illegible] ary things of life [illegible] iative and improbable characters and events.[1] Through it the Forest of Arden becomes for us as actual as Epping Forest; through it Bottom is seen revealed in a halo of imagination which makes him a fit companion for the delicate fairy queen.

As we trace Shakespeare's dramatic development in these plays we can watch this humour deepening in character, just as we can watch the gradual evolution of his dramatic power. *A Pleasant Conceited Comedie called, Loues labors*

[1] On this quality of humour see Sully's *Essay on Laughter* or the present writer's *An Introduction to Dramatic Theory*.

lost (*c.* 1590–1; printed 1598) is a tyro's play. It is full of puns, of ridicule, of satire. The youthful country actor and poet, from the height of his inexperienced wisdom, looks down with amused contempt upon the exaggerated fashions of his time, upon the impossible academies which Italy was introducing all over Europe. *Love's Labour's Lost* is a clever play, but it is not great. Its structure is artificial and mechanical, much of its humour decidedly superficial.[1] *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (*c.* 1591; printed 1623) already strikes a deeper note. In Julia and Silvia we first meet that pair of heroines immortalized later in Rosalind and Celia, Portia and Nerissa, Hero and Beatrice. So similar do these pairs of girl figures seem that we are tempted to believe that at this time Shakespeare had in his company a couple of boy actors, one taller than the other, one more serious and dignified, the other more impertinent and vivacious. In studying Shakespeare's dramas we must always bear in mind the fact that this poet, independent of time and place as he may seem, was an actor in a particular company, intent on writing successful dramas and inevitably creating his characters with at least a slight thought of the particular players who were to impersonate them. In this comedy, too, we meet that pair of clownish servants, likewise with kindred characteristics, called here Launce and Speed, renamed later as Old Gobbo and Young Gobbo or Dogberry and Verges. Surely here once more Shakespeare was thinking of two comedians in his own troupe. *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* shows great advance in characterization, but in structure it remains somewhat mechanical and artificial. Shakespeare so far has been able to secure in comedy neither depth nor organic unity. *A Midsommer nights dreame* (1594–5; printed 1600) introduces us to the richer development of Shakespeare's art. There is magnificent poetry here, wherein the author has got beyond the mere description of the earlier dramas and reaches a stage where imagination transforms the whole of the natural world.

[1] *Love's Labour's Lost* has been usually assigned to the years 1590–1 and regarded as Shakespeare's first play. Recent criticism, on the other hand, has tended to establish the date of production as 1593 or 1594.

And neuer since the middle Summers spring
Met we on hil, in dale, forrest, or mead,
By paued fountaine, or by rushie brooke,
Or in the beached margent of the sea. . . .

Passages such as this leave the meticulous enumeration of nature's beauties far behind. The profundity of this play is seen further in the development of a certain mystical or symbolic note which is ever apparent in the works of Shakespeare's maturity and which reaches its culmination in the famous address of Prospero toward the close of his career.

These things seeme small & vndistinguishable,
Like farre off mountaines turned into Clouds,

says Demetrius, and Hermia answers him :

Me-thinks I see these things with parted eye,
When euery things seemes double

This note is intensified too in some of the last words of the play, where Theseus, commenting on Hippolyta's ridicule of the "Pyramus and Thisbe" playlet, utters what might be regarded as a veritable defence of all the romantic drama :

The best in this kind are but shadowes, and the worst are no worse, if imagination amend them.

Shakespeare's immense advance in stagecraft is fully to be witnessed in this play. The complicated plot with its subtle and careful unravelling displays that at last he has come to the maturity of his powers. Here he is no longer the tyro, but a master of his craft. This sense of power is to be traced in all the other romantic comedies. *As You Like It* (c. 1599–1600 ; printed 1623) shows it clearly. Taking his material from Lodge's *Rosalynde, or Euphues Golden Legacy*,[1] Shakespeare has here reached the summit of his purely romantic art. The story is well told, and the characters of Jaques, Rosalind, Celia, and Touchstone stand out, fully delineated, as even the persons of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* fail to do. The gentle melancholy of the piece, intensified by the only half-satiric presentation

[1] Published in 1590. It has been reprinted in the "Shakespeare Classics," a very useful series which provides material for the study of Shakespeare's sources.

of the professional melancholic in Jaques, added to t
pastoral charm of the Forest of Arden scenes, has mac
this, and rightly, one of the most prized of Shakespeare
comedies. *Twelfe Night, Or what you will* (c. 1600 ; printe
1623), for the plot of which Shakespeare has gone to a
tale told in the *Arcadia* with suggestions apparently from
an Italian piece called *Gl' Ingannati* (1537), carries on the
same tradition with, perhaps, a trifle more of hilarity and
boisterous humour. Touchstone is called to life again in
Feste, Rosalind and Celia in Viola and Olivia. The symbolic
songs, such as "Blow, blow, thou winter wind," which had
added to the charm of *As You Like It*, have here been
reproduced in "O Mistress mine" and "Come away, come
away, Death." The most salient features of *Twelfth Night*,
however, are the character of Malvolio and the Sir Toby
Belch scenes. Malvolio is a more finely drawn study than
any of Shakespeare's previous romantic characters. His
self-satisfied assurance, his ambition, his Puritanic contempt
of others, are all held up to ridicule, yet so subtly is the
caricature put before us, with such infinite humour and
delicacy, that we feel somehow a bond of sympathy for
the ill-used majordomo. What Shakespeare's own purpose
was here, it is hard to determine, but for modern readers
Malvolio holds a place very similar to that occupied by
Shylock. Sir Toby Belch has a general family likeness to
Falstaff, and in the hilarious drinking scene we are irre-
sistibly reminded of adventures in the Boar's Head Tavern.
Both are presented in the same way, with this general halo
of romantic humour which envelops the drunkards and the
oysterers even as it envelops the pathetic fooling of Touch-
tone and the charm of Hermia.

This quality of humour is seen nowhere more plainly
an in the character of Falstaff. *The History of*
e Fourth ; With the battell at Shr... urie, between
d Lord Henry Percy, surnan... ... *Hot...*
rth. With the humorous co...
1597 ; printed 1598 and 1... *Io...*
edy, but it may be d...
mon method of ...

reveals well the peculiar sympathy which is inherent in this mood of humour. Falstaff is a braggart, perhaps a coward, certainly a disreputable old sinner, yet there is hardly anyone who does not feel for him and sympathize with him. If we regard him in the cold light of reason we are bound to shun and to condemn him; but no audience ever could regard Falstaff in the cold light of reason because of this intangible sympathy which Shakespeare has transfused into his pages. The humour of the man is so broad; he, like the characters of the purely romantic comedies, can laugh not only at others, but at himself. His intellect is so acute, his sense of fun so highly developed, that we cannot but take him to our hearts. It is the fact that Shakespeare has presented Falstaff in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* without this humour which makes the majority of readers feel that the latter is an immeasurably weaker and less interesting play.

The pure romantic comedies have been dealt with above, but there remain one or two other dramas related to them or belonging to the same class which must here be considered. *Much adoe about Nothing* (c. 1599; printed 1600), *All's Well, that Ends Well* (c. 1599; printed 1623); *The most excellent Historie of the Merchant of Venice. With the extreame cruellie of Shylocke the Iewe towards the sayd Merchant, in cutting a iust pound of his flesh: and the obtayning of Portia by the choyse of three chests* (c. 1595; printed 1600), and *Measure, for Measure* (c. 1604; printed 1623) are all bound together by the fact that each one presents elements of a more depressing or tragic kind than are to be discovered in the earlier plays. There are serious happenings in the air both in *As You Like It* and in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, but never for one moment do we doubt that all will come right in the end. *The Merchant of Venice* might well have ended as a tragedy. These four plays may be considered as leading the way toward the fuller romantic tragi-comedy of later years, although they are all nearer in form to *As You Like It* than to *The Winter's Tale*. *The Merchant of Venice*, the story of which Shakespeare took from *Il Pecorone* (the 'bond' tale), *Gesta Romanorum* (the

'casket' tale), and Masuccio (the 'Jessica' tale), although it is one of the most popular of Shakespeare's plays, presents the greatest number of critical problems. The clever interweaving of story with story has made it a success upon the stage, but that cannot blind us to the facts that it exhibits a strange lack of unity of tone and that Shylock himself is a figure more calculated for tragedy than for comedy. It is possibly Shakespeare's consciousness of this latter weakness that made him give to some scenes of the drama a more than usually romantic colouring. The whole story is incredible and fanciful. The choosing of the caskets is utter nonsense, and no one ever believes in Portia's masquerade and specious arguments. We are content to suffer a little "willing suspension of disbelief" when we witness *As You Like It,* but *The Merchant of Venice* is frankly impossible. This romantic colouring is intensified by the references to music. So numerous are these that one might well imagine the whole drama to be accompanied by various melodies.

> Let musicke sound while he doth make his choise,
> Then if he loose he makes a Swan-like end,
> Fading in musique,

says Portia in Act III, Scene 2.

> I am neuer merry when I heare sweet musique,

remarks Jessica (Act V, Scene 1) and Lorenzo replies:

> The reason is, your spirits are attentiue. . . .
> The man that hath no musicke in himselfe,
> Nor is not moued with concord of sweet sounds,
> Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoyles,
> The motions of his spirit are dull as night,
> And his affections darke as *Erobus*:
> Let no such man be trusted.

Consciously or unconsciously, Shakespeare has here taken away some of the reality of the play. This unreality was made necessary by the presence of Shylock. Perhaps for contemporaries Shylock was a mere villain, but no amount of modern criticism [1] will take away from modern readers

[1] Such as, for example, Professor Schücking's *Character Problems in Shakespeare's Plays.*

and modern audiences the impression that Shylock is a truly tragic figure. He becomes more than an object of pity; he is a being of awe and majesty, rising far above the vacuous Antonio, the mean and adventurous Bassanio, the would-be clever lady, Portia. There may be justifications for the Christians' contempt of him, but his justification for hating them is still greater. The more we study *The Merchant of Venice* the more we see what a colossal dramatic failure it was. Here two moods, the mood of romantic fantasy and the mood of tragic reality, have met, and neither is satisfied. Shakespeare for once has overstepped the bounds of art.

Much Ado about Nothing (c. 1599) presents something of the same phenomenon, although not in so marked a degree. The main story seems traceable back to Bandello, and to it Shakespeare has added the fascinating figures of Benedick and Beatrice. The tragic atmosphere here is not so pronounced as in the last play, largely because Don John, the villain, is little more than a mere puppet, and, while for a moment a tragic conclusion seems inevitable, the serious portion is conducted in a purely romantic manner, never coming out of the picture as it does in *The Merchant* [illegible] probability of the story aids [illegible] and music is [illegible] clinging folds. [illegible] lyric "Pardon [illegible] is to have had goddesse of the night,' which [illegible] in mind when he wrote his hymn to the Spirit of Night, symbolically arouse emotions in our hearts fit for the receiving of the action and characters of the play Along with the music may be noted, likewise, the use of symbolic language calculated to affect audience or reader. In *The Merchant of Venice* Portia's "It is almost morning" has the same purpose and effect as have Pedro's words in *Much Ado*.

> Good morrow masters, put your Torches out,
> The wolues haue preied, and looke, the gentle
> day
> Before the wheeles of Phœbus, round about
> Dapples the drowsie East with spots of grey.

These romantic comedies, from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to *Much Ado about Nothing*, seem to take place in a realm of dreams and twilight, ere dawn comes to move us once more back to reality.

In *All's Well that Ends Well* (*c.* 1599) and in *Measure for Measure* (*c.* 1604) the world is darker still. The first of these plays seems taken directly from Paynter's *Pallace of Pleasure*, although the story originally appeared in Boccaccio's *Decamerone.* The story is nauseous and disgusting. The thought of a noble woman's so debasing herself as to capture a husband by the means presented here is so degrading that few can take any pleasure in the reading of the play. Coleridge has called Helena the finest of Shakespeare's heroines, but this nineteenth-century critic's attitude toward all of Shakespeare's women is so sentimental that it becomes almost negligible. Helena is one of the most characterless of Shakespeare's heroines. Bertram, whom she tricks into marriage at the end, is equally without personality. His sudden repentance at the close and his declaration that he will love Helena " ever, ever dearly " seem nothing but artificial nonsense. *Measure for Measure* is a finer play. As the story appeared in Cinthio's *Hecatommithi* the sister to save her brother goes to the deputy-governor; the latter treacherously orders the brother to be hanged; the faithful gaoler saves him, and the sister is married to her betrayer. In adapting this theme to the requirements of the stage, Shakespeare has caused Isabella to retain her chastity and has married her to the Duke at the conclusion of the comedy. Again, the plot is improbable and rather nauseous. In spite of Isabella's words to Angelo in Act II, Scene 2, there is little of a real problem put before us, and the presence of a problem could have been the sole excuse for a work on this theme. Isabella, Angelo, the Duke, and Claudio are all weakly drawn characters, touched all of them with Shakespeare's magic power, but never assuming truly individual proportions. The only portions of the play, indeed, where Shakespeare seems thoroughly to enjoy himself are those which normally are condemned to-day. There is an

exquisite humour in the presentation of that lower-world existence where dwell Lucio and Elbow, Froth and Pompey, Mistress Overdone and Barnardine. Especially does he appear to love the last. Barnardine is a mental aristocrat, and his contumacious words to the Duke fully deserve his pardon in the final act of the drama.

Turning back to review this Shakespearian romantic comedy, we find that the plays fall naturally into two groups: those in which the comic and humorous scenes preponderate, and those in which tragedy or scenes of darkness obscure for a time the presence of laughter. In the former, artistic effect has been secured by the sub- [illegible] the rest. All the plays have a family likeness. Apart from the kindred characters already noted, and the common romantic tone, we observe the repetition of devices and of stage tricks in one drama after another. The "tedious brief scene of young Pyramus and his love Thisbe; very tragical mirth" was re-echoed many times in his work; it was a joke too good to be lost. Quince, who makes "fritters of English," finds his brother in Elbow of *Measure for Measure* and in Dogberry of *Much Ado about Nothing*. At the same time, the later group, presenting a common artistic failing, is distinct from the first; the plays of this type inevitably lead toward the romantic tragi-comedy of Beaumont and Fletcher.

(ii) The Romantic Tragi-comedy of Beaumont and Fletcher

This romantic [illegible] rise to several marked developments both in tragedy and in comedy. *A King and No King* is as typical as any of

the style of drama which came to be particularly associated with these two authors. The scene is an impossible Iberia, where Arbaces, a headstrong young monarch, falls in love with his supposed sister, Panthea. The theme is a dangerous one, and it is treated with a certain air of prurience. Every means is used to heighten the emotions of the work, and the conversation of the two lovers is such that we feel disappearing the older nobility of the Elizabethan age. The end of the fourth act finds us on the threshold of what appears must be a tragedy:

Panthea. But is there nothing else,
That we may do, but only walk? methinks
Brothers and Sisters lawfully may kiss.
Arbaces. And so they may *Panthea*, so will we,
And kiss again too; we were too scrupulous,
And foolish, but we will be so no more.
Panthea. If you have any mercy, let me go
To prison, to my death, to any thing:
I feel a sin growing upon my blood,
Worse than all these, hotter than yours.
Arbaces. That is impossible, what shou'd we do?
Panthea. Flie, Sir, for Heavens sake.
Arbaces. So we must away.
Sin grows upon us more by this delay.

And then suddenly in the last act it is discovered that Arbaces is not the true king, is not the brother of Panthea, the rightful queen, and so can marry her, regain his seemingly lost throne, and be happy ever after. The artificiality of the whole floods in upon us, and we see how far this type of drama, albeit well constructed and well written, has sunk from the deeper, richer, profounder, romantic comedy of Shakespeare. In scene it is more truly impossible; in character it is stereotyped and artificial; in language less close to the true workings of the human heart. It lacks individuality; one romantic tragi-comedy will follow another, without the introduction of fresh characters and often even without the introduction of fresh themes. *Bonduca* (*c.* 1612; printed 1647) presents the same atmosphere with more tragic implications and with a shifting from the East to ancient British history and legend. Here

some distinct merit can be discerned in the portrayal of Bonduca and of Caractacus. Still more typical is *The Custome of the Country* (*c.* 1619; printed 1647). This was written, according to recent theory, by Fletcher and Massinger, but it is probable that the former was mainly responsible for the construction of the play. The theme is thoroughly romantic. Arnoldo marries Zenocia, but Clodio claims the custom of the country, that a newly married girl be sent to his house. Arnoldo, his brother Rutilio, and Zenocia fly by boat. Outside Lisbon Zenocia is captured by pirates, but her two cavaliers escape. From this point the action of the comedy breaks into two. Arnoldo is loved by Hippolyta, is tempted, and is finally cast into the hands of law officers. In her rage Hippolyta poisons Zenocia; but, repenting, releases Arnoldo, brings Zenocia back to life, and herself marries Leopold. The other theme concerns Rutilio, who in a street fight apparently kills Duarte, the son of Guiomar. The last-named character, through a promise, shields the supposed murderer. His adventures are various, and he is about to be executed as a murderer when Duarte, happily recovered, reveals himself. The whole play is one of surprises and intrigue inter-[illegible]

[illegible]

of each impossible. *The Pilgrim* (1621; printed 1647), *The Prophetesse* (1622; printed 1647), *The Island Princesse* (1621; printed 1647), and *The Sea Voyage* (1622; printed 1647) are among the best of a series of flagrantly romantic works. The last, no doubt written almost entirely by Fletcher, but showing the presence of some Massinger characteristics in a few scenes, reminds us in the opening of *The Tempest*. The theme is somewhat complicated and deals almost entirely with love. Rosellia, her daughter Clarinda, and others have formed an island commonwealth of women since Rosellia's husband has been reported slain. This husband, Sebastian, in reality lives on a neighbouring island, from which in the end he escapes Into this romantic atmosphere come Albert and Aminta in search of the

latter's brother Raimond. They are captured by the Amazons, and there Clarinda falls in love with Albert. The men are about to be put to death when Sebastian makes a belated appearance. As is evident, every attempt here is made to intensify the unreality of the setting, and as much opportunity as possible is given for the elaboration of out-of-the-way amorous sentiments. In writing *The Maid in the Mill* (1623; printed 1647) Fletcher seems to have been aided by William Rowley. It is an ill-constructed play with some fine poetical passages and a certain amount of good comic business. The story deals with the enmity of the houses of Julio and Bellides. Antonio of the first falls in love with Ismenia, daughter of Bellides. Their love is nearly crossed by the treachery of Martino and Aminta, who in the end find themselves married to one another. A couple of subplots run alongside of this—one in which Otrante abducts Florimell, but is awed by her purity, and another in which Bustopha, the clownish son of Franio, contributes some rude merriment to the play. Of the same type is *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (*c.* 1614; printed 1634), attributed to Fletcher and Shakespeare. Shakespeare's hand in it, particularly in Act I and in the earlier gaoler scenes, seems to the present writer assuredly evident, but probably no certain judgment can ever be made upon it from the mere evidence of style. Here we find the proud and rather caddish Palamon and the somewhat more refined Arcite thrown into throes of love for Emilia. The play is full of romantic sentiment and ends in a typically tragi-comical way, one of the characters, according to legend, dying and the other accepting the bride. *The Faire Maide of the Inne* (1626; printed 1647) deals with a theme similar to that of *The Maid in the Mill.* Its association with Fletcher has been frequently questioned, but in essence it follows his style. Albertus, father of Cæsario, quarrels with Baptista, father of Mentivole. The last mentioned falls in love with Clarissa, Cæsario's sister, and after a number of complicated delays wins her in marriage at the close. Cæsario, for his part, loves Biancha, the fair maid of the inn, who turns out to be Baptista's

All the Beaumont and Fletcher plays[1] of this type betray the same features. Everywhere is a straining for a more and more impossible romance. Artificiality of sentiment takes the place of truth to character; pruriency that of high moral tone; complication of plot that of due incident

evitability, which characterize the works of Shakespeare.

(iii) The Influence of Beaumont and Fletcher on Shakespeare

Shakespeare himself, however, was unquestionably influenced by Beaumont and Fletcher, producing in *The Tragedie of Cymbeline* (c. 1609; printed 1623), *The Winters Tale* (c. 1610; printed 1623), *The Tempest* (1611; printed 1623), and *Pericles, Prince of Tyre* (c. 1608; printed 1609) works of a distinctly Beaumont and Fletcher cast. It must be remembered, of course, while we note this influence upon his work, that Shakespeare's own romantic style was moving steadily in this direction in the closing years of the sixteenth century. In *Pericles* Shakespeare no doubt collaborated with another, who has been identified variously as George Wilkins, the author of *The Miseries of Inforst Mariage* (1607), and William Rowley. Concerning the parts taken by these collaborators opinion has differed sadly, although it seems from the style and vitality of the dialogue that even the most suspected passages, the brothel scenes, must have owed something at least to the hand of the master. There is an intimate connexion between the similar passages in *Measure for Measure* and this play.

[1] It is observable that only a small percentage owe anything to Beaumont. Most were written by Fletcher and Massinger in collaboration.

The shipwreck, the sudden discoveries, the descent to what seems the atmosphere of tragedy, and the sudden brightening of the close all mark out the relationship between this play and the romantic tragi-comedies of the time. *Cymbeline*, like *Bonduca*, takes us back to early Britain, and here once more the atmosphere is one of improbability. We note the decay of Shakespeare's style. His characters are no longer individuals, but stock types, for whatever may be said concerning the beauty of Imogen and Perdita and Miranda these women have not the same features as their elder sisters of the late sixteenth century. Shakespeare is evidently growing tired. He repeats himself again and again. Iago is weakened in Iachimo; Othello's story is travestied in that of Cleontes; the shipwreck of *Pericles* is utilized once more for *The Tempest*. For once, in *The Winter's Tale*, Shakespeare reaches his old note of power when he introduces Autolycus, who blesses his stars he is not a simple man, but, in spite of this and of the beautiful verse, *The Winter's Tale* is not a well-constructed play. Peculiarly enough *The Tempest* is the one play of Shakespeare's in which he keeps to the pseudo-classical unities, and one wonders if here he was writing for a more cultured audience, an audience which would be inclined to appreciate more the subservience to rules. Whatever classicism is in the form, however, there is none in the treatment. A mythic isle—Shakespeare does not seem to know whether it be situate in the Mediterranean or in the West Indies—a magician, an airy sprite, a monster of the earth, people lost and found, a novel love scene, all is here that could please the new taste. There is an atmosphere of impossibility in this play, and although Shakespeare by what we may call his transcendental idealism has made of this one of his greatest masterpieces we must recognize that the type, as a type, is lower than any which hitherto he had attempted. Artificiality breathes over the whole.

(iv) The Development of Romantic Drama

With infinite variations, now becoming as in *The Tempest* almost symbolic, now approaching the sphere of comedy proper, and now moving into more tragic realms, the romantic tragi-comedy continued to develop in the seventeenth century. Thomas Dekker started his dramatic work in 1599 with *The Pleasant Comedie of Old Fortunatus* (printed 1600), a play which in many ways anticipates the spirit of *The Tempest.* The mingling of mortal and supernatural creations, the rich poetry couched in language of a peculiarly fanciful sort, and the employment of magic show the intimate relationship between the spirit of the two plays. Of the less romantically fantastic types of this form of drama Massinger's efforts are interesting examples. *The Bond Man: An Antient Story* (1623; printed 1624) presents the rising of Syracusan slaves under Marullo, who turns out to be a Theban who is seeking to avenge on Leosthenes the latter's desertion of his sister. The plot is complicated by Marullo's love for Cleora, the new betrothed of Leosthenes, and there is a subplot dealing with the disagreeable Corisca, wife of Creon, who attempts to draw her stepson into sin. No play, perhaps, better illustrates the descent of drama than does this The construction is excellent; some of the dialogue comes very close to the level of Shakespeare's verse; but the characters are artificial, and the tone of high moral force has disappeared entirely. Even Marullo's seemingly noble passion for Cleora has something in it of a hypocritical and prurient colouring. In *The Renegado, A Tragœcomedie* (1624; printed 1630) there are many of the same features. The play hovers constantly on the verge of tragedy in spite of the comic scenes in which Gazet appears, but in the end Vitelli and his Turkish love Donusa are saved by the conscience-stricken renegade Grimaldi. Particularly interesting in this play is the Catholic atmosphere, the whole drama turning on Christian sentiments. The general atmosphere of the work is fine and full of passion, but with the sudden tragi-comic conclusion, there is the usual

falling-off in the last act. Love passion, chaste and licentious, added to the usual disquisitions upon morality and virtue fill *The Maid of Honour* (printed 1632). Clearly there are to be seen here the stock situations and the stock characters of this type of drama. There is the usual unhappy but honest lover, Adorni, a pathetic figure; there is the usual comic character in Signior Sylli; there is the licentious lover in Fulgentio, the noble heroine in Camiola, the headstrong king in Roberto, and the amorous woman in Aurelia. In spite of many beautifully written passages, these stereotyped figures detract from our interest in the play as a whole. Romantic sentiment and talk of nobility occupy, too, most of *The Bashful Lover* (1636; printed 1655). Once more stock characters are in evidence. Maria is the typical wronged maiden, and Ascanio the equally typical licentious gallant struck in the end with thoughts of conscience. The emotions of the reader, however, are hardly ever moved in this play, the general tendency of Caroline drama to talk endlessly on matters of passion leaving the dialogue chill and unenthusiastic.

As a whole Massinger is one of the best of those who attempted this style of dramatic writing. His atmosphere is less vitiated than that of Fletcher and Shirley, but even in him the general degeneracy of the theatre is quite evident. He repeats his characters, as he repeats his themes. The profound and deep-felt passion that is to be found in Shakespeare has, in his pages, given way to rhetoric. Even his virtue is felt at times to be a thing external, a thing to be talked about rather than to be felt. Above all, in the unnatural conclusions to his plays we discern the loss of the greater spirit which made possible the terror of *King Lear* and the tremendous close of *Othello*.

There are upward of twenty dramatists who approached this style of drama in the thirty years between 1610 and 1640. Only a few of these can find mention here.

Thomas Middleton and William Rowley are associated by collaboration as are Fletcher and Massinger. Both are rather more important for their purely comic work than for their efforts in the sphere of tragi-comedy. *The*

Mayor of Quinborough (printed 1661, but probably one of Middleton's earliest efforts), *A Tragi-Coomodie, Called the Witch* (printed 1778, written by Middleton), *A Faire Quarrell* (printed 1617, by Middleton and Rowley), *The Spanish Gipsie* (1621–2; printed 1653, a joint effort), all call for attention in this section. *The Mayor of Quinborough* is the weakest of them all, presenting crude farce of the roughest form alongside of dismal tragedy. Only some few passages of startling poetry merit notice in it. In mentioning this play, attention might be drawn to the numberless dramatic fashions of the time. Ancient Britain called many of the dramatists to turn their eyes upon Geoffrey of Monmouth and his companions, so that this play, *Lear*, *Cymbeline*, *Bonduca*, and a host of other tragedies and tragi-comedies appear between 1606 and 1616. This is only one of the similar movements of the time, perhaps indicative of the general decay of independence and individuality in the age.[1] *The Witch*, considered as a work of art, is but a pitiful production, although its connexion with *Macbeth* will always cause interest to be taken in it, and its melodramatic features are eminently typical of certain tendencies of the time. The story of the play, complicated by a series of cross-currents, is, briefly, that a Duke, who has slain his Duchess's father, bids her pledge his health in a cup made of her father's skull. The Duchess, annoyed at this flamboyant humour, seeks means to poison her husband, thinks he is dead, but returns to his grace when it is found that the dose has not been sufficiently strong to prove fatal. Naturally, out of a theme such as this little of true dramatic worth could spring. With *A Fair Quarrel* we reach a different world entirely, and it is legitimate to argue that Rowley was responsible for many of the more brilliant passages in this play and in those which follow. In *A Fair Quarrel* the scene is not romantically set in some Eastern empire, but the general atmosphere of sentiment connects this drama with the other plays we have been considering. Three separate plots are to be traced in the work, two of which are of

[1] *Cf. infra*, p. 175.

minor importance. It is the third which is of value. Th
duel of Captain Ager with the Colonel, Lady Ager's despai
and her attempt to prevent the duel from taking place
remove us to a realm far enough away from the vapid
rhetoric of so many of the dramatists of the period. We
feel here the presence of a mind purer and deeper thinking
than is to be discovered among the Fletchers and Shirleys of Caroline days. *The Changeling* has something of the same power, although it is expressed in a different way. Once more we can trace Rowley's influence, if not in the actual wording at least in the conception of character. It is not too much to say that the most subtle character-drawing in Caroline drama is to be found in this tragedy, which will later be considered in more detail. *The Spanish Gipsy* is an excellently written tragi-comedy. Alvarez and Pretiosa are disguised as gipsies; they are eventually discovered, and the latter marries Don John. With this main theme goes another, wherein the licentious Roderigo deflowers Clara, but, repentance-struck, ultimately marries her. Comic relief is presented in Sancho and Soto. There are no outstanding characters here, although Pretiosa is a living type, but the general high tone of the work, even in spite of hackneyed situation, reflects credit on these two collaborators.

Among those who, later, did most to cultivate this form
of drama might be numbered Thomas Ford, William
hirley, and Sir William D'Avenant, the last-mentioned
estined to prove one of the main links between the earlier
nd the later Caroline eras. Ford's activity was confined
ainly to the sphere of the horror tragedy, but in two
amas, *The Fancies, Chast and Noble* (printed 1638) and
e Ladies Triall (1638; printed 1639), he associated
nself with the Beaumont and Fletcher romance. In
h of these we move away from the higher nobility of
vley and Middleton. *The Fancies* seems to exist for
licate situations. The three nieces of Octavio, Marquis
ena, kept in seclusion and not revealed as his relations,
ll as the character of Flavia, sold by her husband to a
of the Court, afford the author plenty of opportunity

for indulging in those indelicately passionate scenes more fully expressed in his tragedies. Decadence in Ford had firmly set its seal upon the age. *The Lady's Trial* is slightly more healthy in tone, but the characters are hopelessly artificial and stereotyped. Aurelio is the usual faithful friend; Adorni the usual licentious lover; Spinella the inevitable injured heroine; and Auria the equally inevitable jealous husband. Except for a few passages of extraordinary beauty of language, the play has little merit; it is one of the mechanically conceived and mechanically constructed dramas of the age.

Shirley's work in this style is in bulk greater than any of the others save that of Fletcher. Over half a score of his plays can be classed in this romantic tragi-comedy section, although not one of them stands forward as a masterpiece. They have a hopeless similarity one to another, and display lack of individuality in the treatment of character and of theme. Shirley, we may say, is the last great poet of the 'Elizabethan' era, but how far he has sunk can be realized by a glance at even the best of his works. Of these romantic comedies perhaps the best are *The Brothers* (1626; printed 1653), *Changes: Or, Love in a Maze* (1632), *The Young Admiral* (1633; printed 1637), and *The Gamester* (1633; printed 1637). The first deals with the stock figure of a tyrannical father and the true love of Felisarda and Fernando. Some scenes in it are cleverly written, but the romantic portion of the plot is somewhat dull and uninteresting. *Changes* deals more entirely with the world of wit, and, were it not for some serious scenes, might be classed with the more comic productions of Shirley's pen. *The Young Admiral*, albeit the figures are mechanically conceived, is a much finer play than either of the other two. The complicated plot is excellently managed, and Rosinda's character has some features that call for praise. It is much healthier in tone than that which succeeded it, *The Gamester*. Comedy, pathos, indelicacy, coarseness, and rhetorical sentiment mingle in this drama. The plot, given to the dramatist by King Charles himself, is excellently worked out, but the

failure of the age is seen in the decadent tone of much of the dialogue and in the general inability of the playwright to rise above hackneyed situation. The 'roaring' scenes, for example, which provide a good deal of the comic interest, are obviously reminiscent of many similar scenes in earlier dramas. It is useless noting further Shirley's romantic works. Nearly all of them, *The Gratefull Servant* (printed 1630), *The Bird in a Cage* (printed 1633), *The Opportunitie* (printed 1640), and the rest, show similar intermingling of high poetry, rhetorical sentiment, and indelicate, coarse, and decadent imaginings.

With D'Avenant's *The Platonick Lovers* (printed 1636) and *Love and Honour* (1634; printed 1649) we reach the point where the purely romantic tragi-comedy tends to move into the world of the heroic drama. In the elaboration of platonic sentiment in the first, and the theme (Love and Honour) of the second, we come very close to the spirit of Dryden and of Orrery. The Theander and Eurithea of *The Platonic Lovers* are not far removed from Almanzor and Almahide, and *Love and Honour* is full of that lofty, inflated heroic diction so typical of the later drama. As we shall find, the heroic tragedy or tragi-comedy is a direct descendant of the tragi-comic atmosphere inaugurated by Beaumont and Fletcher in 1611 and hinted at even in the mid-sixteenth century in the tragi-comic interludes.

Of the lesser writers of this time there are many, but few require even mention here. Robert Davenport contributed an interesting specimen of this drama in *The City Night-Cap: Or, Crede quod habes, & habes* (1624; printed 1661), a peculiar play written in more than ordinarily fine blank verse. The main theme is taken from Cervantes' oft-used tale of the *Curioso Impertinente.* Lorenzo, a typically jealous husband, bids Philippo tempt his wife Abstemia. She is honest, but Lorenzo, in the madness of his fever, suborns slaves to witness against her. She leaves the city for Milan, but is eventually reconciled to her husband. Opposed to this is a contrary story in which the over-trusting Lodovico allows all liberty to his priggish

wife Dorothea. She sins with Francisco and confesses her fault to her husband when he comes to her disguised as a friar. Several of the scenes remind us of the brothel portions of *Pericles* and of *The Woman Hater*; these, like the more serious portions of the drama, are well written. As a whole it is one of the best of the plays of this kind written during the period. Thomas Rawlins' *The Rebellion* (1639; printed 1640) is a much less capably written play, but it is interesting as showing the elaboration of those tricks of the stage with which the Restoration drama was filled. Pathos appears in the love of Giovanno and Evadne, and there are the usual low-comedy scenes beloved by audiences of the time in the tailors, who remind us of Dekker's shoemakers. It is the stage trappings, however that call for most attention—a city besieged, bandits, a Machiavellian villain, jealousies, class pride, prisons, rescues, disguisings—all mingled into a singularly romantic plot. With *The Queene of Arragon* (printed 1640) of William Habington we move into the sphere of Dryden's *Secret Love*. The witty, frivolous Cleantha is conceived in his style. This maiden is pursued by Sanmartino; she succeeds in cheating him and marries Oniate. The more serious portion of the play deals with the magnanimous sentimental loves of Decastro, Ascanio, and Florentio for the Queen. In its union of wit and of heroic idealism it directly anticipates what was to prove one of the most popular forms of Restoration drama. Many are the dramas of the time which adopt something of the same atmosphere. Sir William Berkeley's *The Lost Lady* (printed 1638) is a fairly well-written specimen of the class, with an excellently drawn character in Hermione. The device of the heroine, however, in her disguise as a Moor, removes the theme of the play far from the realms of probability. *The Jealous Lovers* (printed 1632) of Thomas Randolph and *The Royall Slave* (1636; printed 1639) of William Cartwright might likewise be mentioned as typical examples of this essentially Caroline form of drama.

The actual examination of particular plays is of less importance than the grasping of the salient characteristics of

the group. As has been shown, the tendency is constantly toward the hopelessly unreal and the impossible. The plots are full of the most artificial and startling devices; the characters are no longer individualized, but reduced to the level of mere types. In some of the later plays, too, a movement can be seen which led ultimately to the elaboration of heroic sentiment and heroic proportions in the plays of the Restoration. It will further be noted that even in the early seventeenth century this tragi-comedy broke into two clearly marked divisions, each destined to be the forerunner of a definite type of drama in after years. The term tragi-comedy may apply to plays of the type of *A King and No King*, where the atmosphere is almost wholly serious, but the conclusion moderately happy; it may also apply to plays such as *The Queen of Arragon*, where a comic plot moves forward alongside of a tragic. The first is the predecessor of the heroic drama proper; the second leads toward the 'mixed' species patronized in his early days by Dryden, and by Etherege in *The Comical Revenge*. The important point to notice in all this development is the weakening of true dramatic conception. Shakespeare, in spite of his few lapses, had shown clearly the main scope of great drama; his successors, writing for a less manly public, lost sight of his high purpose. The extravagant conclusions, introduced for the sake of novelty, destroyed the atmosphere of many of the plays; the crude intermingling of tragedy and of comedy gave an effect that may have interested the audiences of the time, but which we can never accept as a true purpose in dramatic art.

(v) Pastoral Plays

With these romantic tragi-comedies may possibly be taken the various pastoral plays written between 1600 and 1642. Shakespeare's sixteenth-century comedies, no doubt, were pastoral in a sense, but their pastoralism was not wholly out of touch with reality. In the years that followed, this element, which seems to have a perennial attraction for ages of Court corruption and decadent life, came to assume more

artificial features, and to this it may have been led partly by the immense interest taken in the many romances of a similar atmosphere which catered for the requirements of a leisured reading public. Ben Jonson descended from his bitter portraiture of contemporary follies to pen *The Sad Shepherd* (printed 1641), Shirley moved into the same world in *A Pastorall called the Arcadia* (printed 1640), Fletcher adopted it in *The Faithful Shepheardesse* (printed 1629), Randolph in his *Amyntas or The Impossible Dowry* (printed 1638), an adaptation of Tasso's famous dramatic poem *Aminta*, and Rutter used the pastoral conventions for his *Shepheards Holy-Day* (printed 1635). Again and again the writers of the time, in prose romance, in lyric ecstasy, in more ambitious stanzaic poem, essayed this style, bringing to it often something of beauty, but displaying in their concentration upon a form of art which gives no scope for realistic passion the gradually narrowing limits of their genius. Amongst all the works of this kind the efforts of Ben Jonson and of Fletcher have become deservedly the most famous There is apparent in their works a charm of expression and a beauty of conception lacking in the plays of the others. At the same time, even the best plays of this class have about them an atmosphere of artificiality, which effectually prevents any pastoral play reaching the summits of literary expression. Pastoral, after all, remains a poet's game, and while it may be pleasant for a winter hour or so to imagine that *Et ego in Arcadia* one always feels that this form of art is weak and lacking in interest. Charm it may have, and prettiness of a Watteauesque pattern, but never profound thought and high passion. Pan and his nymphs, Chloris and Corydon, pass into forgetfulness before the breezy laughter of a Falstaff or the tragic terror of a Lear.

CHAPTER III

REALISTIC COMEDY AND SATIRICAL PLAYS

Shakespeare and Jonson

ALWAYS opposed to the artificiality of the romantic tragi-comedy and of the pastoral drama is to be found in the seventeenth century the realistic comedy. It has already been seen how in the late sixteenth century the realistic farce, deriving its tone from the earlier interludes, had preserved an independent existence alongside of the romantic comedy patronized by Greene and Lyly. This earlier form of realistic play, often with close reminiscences of the Latin drama, was adopted by many dramatists in the last years of Elizabeth's reign, and was carried forward by them until Jonson came to set his seal upon the type and give it a strength and a purpose which previously it had only too often lacked.

Among these earlier dramatists Shakespeare, naturally, calls for first attention, for in *The Taming of the Shrew* (*c.* 1595; printed 1623) and in [illegible] *conceited Comedie, of Syr Iohn Falstaffe, and the merrie Wiues of Windsor* (*c.* 1599; printed 1602) he produced two of the most capable and interesting works of this type written in the last years of the century. Both of these are reworkings of older dramas, the first of a still extant *Taming of A Shrew*, and the second of a play now lost—probably, according to the theory of recent investigators, of *The Jealous Comedy* mentioned in Henslowe's *Diary*. The exact amount of Shakespearian dialogue in each has been a point of controversy for many years. Some would give to Shakespeare the two 'Shrew' plays, others would deny that he wrote anything but a few lines of the later one; Falstaff in *The Merry Wives* seems to many a travesty of the fat knight of *Henry IV*, to many he seems a truly Shakespearian figure. The plays, however, always remain, and remain

as excellent acting farces, displaying the hand, if not of Shakespeare entirely, at least of an exceedingly capable playwright who knew the requirements and exigencies of the Elizabethan stage. Both plays are marked by many

and, for example, the Sir Toby scenes of *Twelfth Night* or the Bottom scenes of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In the latter we are in the presence of Shakespeare's humour; in the former there is only the more farcical and the more realistic type of comic dialogue and of comic characterization. These plays may be taken as typical of a number of others of kindred features; good acting farces, with entertainingly comic scenes and occasionally well-drawn characters, with many reminiscences of Terentian and Plautan comedy, but frequently lacking unity of aim and without any higher appeal.

To Ben Jonson belongs the credit of infusing into this form of drama a richer and a deeper note. Jonson, intimately conversant with the life of his own time, a man closely associated with the theatre, and, although boasting no university degree, steeped in the literatures of classic times, was eminently fitted to carry out his self-appointed task. He appeared at a time when the University Wits and Shakespeare, their hated follower, were establishing upon the stage the romantic comedy and the flamboyant tragedy. He looked round him and saw the classic precision he adored being crushed out of existence in the face of more popular tendencies. He found a romantic comedy he must have regarded as foolish, a farcical type lacking in definite purpose, a crude revenge tragedy full of romantic grotesqueries, and a superman tragedy wanting in all calmness and restraint. Boldly, as was his way, he set himself to cure the theatrical evils of the time by establishing a comic and a tragic form based on classic example. In the latter endeavour he had no success; in the former he succeeded in making himself the greatest figure of his age.

It is undeniable that his efforts were tentative. We know that he had written many plays before the appearance of the first version of *Every Man in his Humour* in 1598; we can see how his ideas, or his daring, developed between the publication of that first version and the issue of the 1616 edition of his *Works*. Indeed, while glancing at the plays written between 1595 and 1600 we may even come to the conclusion that this pioneer was anticipated and maybe was influenced by other contemporaries, including at their head the robust figure of George Chapman. On the other hand, whatever tentative movements we discover in his art and whatever influence of others we find, Jonson will always remain the chief and dominating dramatist of the satirical comedy.

His extant plays are readily divisible into one or two well-marked groups. The masques, the one unfinished pastoral, and the tragedies stand each by themselves. In the realm of comedy we find *The Case is Alterd* (printed 1609, but possibly acted about 1597), *Every Man in his Humor* (acted 1598; printed in two versions, 1601 and 1616), *The Comicall Satyre of Every Man Out Of his Humor* (1599; printed 1600), *The Fountaine of Selfe-Loue. Or Cynthias Reuels* (c. 1600; printed 1601), *Poetaster or The Arraignment* (1601; printed 1602), *Volpone Or The Foxe* (1606; printed 1607), *Epicoene, Or The silent Woman* (1609; printed 1616), *The Alchemist* (1610; printed 1612), *Bartholomew Fayre* (1614; printed 1631), *The Diuell is an Asse* (1616; printed 1631), *The Staple of Newes* (1625; printed 1631), *The Magnetick Lady: Or, Humors Reconcil'd* (printed 1640), and *A Tale of a Tub* (printed 1640). There is an obvious gap between the first five and the rest, so that the four famous later plays, *Volpone*, *Epicoene*, *The Alchemist*, and *Bartholomew Fair* fall into a group by themselves. For our purpose it may be well to start with the revised (1616) version of what is Jonson's most famous play, *Every Man in his Humour*. The very title of this play shows us Jonson's aim in characterization. He endeavours to harmonize a medieval medical conceit with the methods employed in the Latin theatre. For the Middle

Ages the 'humours' or natural moistures of the brain governed a man's nature; too much of one, or a shifting of the due proportions governing normality, would produce eccentricity of one sort or another. Thus melancholy, greed, timorousness, choler, all were 'humours,' and the person who exhibited any of these was described as 'humorous' It is obvious that if art is to make use of these humours it has to depart to a certain extent from the more individual portraiture of separate men and women. It has to deal with a type, not with a personality. This is precisely what Terence did in his dramas. His testy old fathers are all the same, his cunning slaves have all the same features; he seizes, that is to say, some salient feature of a class of men and produces his characters to pattern. This method Jonson, being a classicist, determined to follow. Still further, he determined to carry into practice a time-honoured dictum of classical critics. Every one who had written about comedy had assumed that the object of this form of drama was to ridicule the vices of men, put folly in a foolish shape before the audience, and so laugh the spectators into good behaviour. Unanimous as were the critics on this point, few dramatists had put it into practice. Jonson determined that his comedy should be a satiric comedy; and for that purpose the humours gave him the very tool he required. All satire depends upon exaggeration, and by exaggerating his eccentricities Jonson was able to produce exactly the effect at which he aimed.

When we come to view this particular comedy of Jonson's we see the way in which he has realized his ideal. His drama is no longer merely farcical; it is written with a purpose. He has allied scholarship with art and made his humours real. Here, declares the author himself in his prologue, are no impossible romantic episodes, no stage tricks, no fantastic fripperies,

> But deedes and [illegible]

The follies of a *braggadocio*, of a tyrannous father, of a jealous husband, all are put before us; the ruling eccentricities of the age are mocked out of court. This mention of the typical characters of the play may lead us to inquire exactly into Jonson's merits. We see in the *dramatis personæ* very little beyond anglicized figures taken from Latin comedy. Bobadill and Kiteley and Brainworm all have their prototypes in the dramatic works of Terence. May we not say, therefore, that Jonson is more of an adapter than of an individual dramatist? Does this not betoken a fatal lack of inventiveness on his part? Moreover, when we come to analyse the plot of the play we find many points wherein the author has fallen short of his ideal. One may suffice as an example. He believes in unity of construction; yet *Every Man in his Humour* is by no means an artistic whole. For the first scenes our interest centres upon Knowell, for the rest it centres upon Knowell's son. There are in the play, therefore, two spheres of interest, just as there are in the later play *Bartholomew Fair*, and our impression of the play as a whole is weakened thereby. There can be no denial that Jonson, in spite of his high art and his constant care, often proves himself artistically at fault. At the same time, his skill in making the old humours live, his vivid observation of contemporary life, his penetrating insight into the vices of his age, distinguish his plays as well above the usual level of the time. Jonson is a magnificent satirist. He has just that power of revealing the salient features and of repressing the points not required for his portrait which characterize the work of the greatest satirists of classical times and later. Unlike Shakespeare, he had the true satirist's horror of traits which he himself possessed. Boastful and arrogant, he hated boastfulness and arrogance; mixing in the amusements of tavern life, he yet hated many of the things he saw there. Like the other satirists, he had the power of recognizing his own follies and vices in others. Moreover, Jonson was a true dramatist. Some of his later plays may be weak and even uninteresting; but in *Every Man in his Humour* and in the other comedies which rank

[illegible] over a kind of theatrical [illegible] ...re the comedies of the [illegible] to get an infinite deal of fun out of stage situation allied to character. His witticisms are not, to employ French terminology, the result of the *mot d'esprit*, but of the *mot de caractère* and the *mot de situation*. There is a great amount of this in the scenes where Stephen and Matthew appear. Thus, for example, in Act III, Scene 1, Bobadill is discoursing of his prowess, and Edward Knowell is leading him on, the two gulls listening eagerly.

> *Bob.* Oh lord, sir? by S George, I was the first man, that entred the breach: and, had I not effected it with resolution, I had beene slaine, if I had had millions of liues.
>
> *E. Kn.* 'Twas pittie, you had not ten; a cats, and your owne, ifaith. But, was it possible?
>
> (*Mat* 'Pray you, marke this discourse, sir.
>
> *Step* So, I doe)

Another example of the same type of wit is to be found at the close of Act IV, Scene 2, when Bobadill draws in affected anger.

> *E. Kn.* Gentlemen, forbeare, I pray you
>
> *Bob.* Well, sirrah, you, Holofernes. by my hand, I will pinck your flesh, full of holes, with my rapier for this; I will, by this good heauen: Nay, let him come, let him come, gentlemen, by the body of Saint George, Ile not kill him.

It is touches such as these which show Jonson as the true dramatist.

That Jonson moved into this world of contemporary London life only by slow gradations is made clear by the fact that the first quarto of *Every Man in his Humour* is set in Italy with all the characters Italian, and by the additional facts that *The Case is Altered* is scened in Milan, and *Every Man out of his Humour* is in an undetermined locality with characters mainly of Italian titles. *Cynthia's Revels* has, moreover, its scene in "Gargaphie," and *Poetaster* is set in a fanciful Rome. The change from this sphere of fantastic satire to the realistic note of the 1616 *Every Man in his Humour* and *Bartholomew Fair* came to Jonson only later in life. His art at first was influenced

by the more imaginative and romantic touches apparent in such plays as *Love's Labour's Lost* in the late sixteenth century.

This is particularly noticeable in Jonson's first (extant) comedy, *The Case is Altered*, where Juniper and Onion are made instruments to satirize speech fashions of the day just as the various comic characters are in *Love's Labour's Lost*. There may be a touch of ridicule in the romantic plot of this drama, with its theme of a child lost at birth and reappearing to a distressed father, and of a highborn maiden brought up, in ignorance of her parentage, in the hut of a miserly beggar, but after all Jonson got his theme from good classical sources, the *Aulularia* and the *Captivi*. The main interest of the piece, however, does not lie in its romantic episodes; the author's chief care was given to the more humorous figures of Juniper, Onion, and Jaques. There may be noted here a frequent failing in Jonson's art. Finely neo-classical as he is, and careful over the construction of his plots, he often allows his personal bitterness to interfere with his artistry. Thus in this particular play the first scene opens to introduce us to a gentleman named Antonio Balladino, who is readily recognized as the contemporary poet and dramatist, Anthony Munday. We are led to expect that Balladino will play a prominent part in the development of the story, but he never reappears. Jonson had had his fling at his rival and let him go, careless of the consequences to his art.

This personal bitterness with less interference with the conduct of the plot appears again in *Every Man out of his Humour*, in which unquestionably Clove is meant as a satirical portrait of Marston, Carlo Buffone of a certain Charles Chester, and Puntarvolo presumably of Sir Walter Raleigh. The plot of this comedy is at one and the same time of the most subtle and delicate structure and of the most mechanical form. We can see here, as we cannot see in Shakespeare's plays, the working of intellect behind the *dramatis personæ*, and even while we admire the sheer cleverness of Jonson's invention we feel that there is not here present that higher imagination which conceived the

more organic unities of Shakespeare's works. The presenting of the various humours as outhumoured at the last, and the final triumph that lies in the outhumouring of the outhumourer is excellently carried through, so that this stands as one of the most brilliant of Jonson's plays. Hardly any comedy so abounds in critical dicta as does [illegible]

> *As when some one peculiar quality*
> Doth so possesse a man, that it doth draw
> All his affects, his spirits, and his powers
> In their conflunctions all to runne one way.
> This may be truly said to be a Humor,
> But that a Rooke in wearing a pide feather,
> The cable hatband, or the three-pild ruffe,
> A yard of shoe-tie, or the Switzers knot
> On his French garters, should affect a Humor,
> O, 'tis more than most ridiculous.

So, too, he opens a discussion on the nature of comedy and shows plainly his detestation of the common romanti business of the age in the words of Mites, who complains

> That the argument of his Comedie might haue been of som other nature, as of a Duke to be in loue with a Countesse, & tha Countesse to be in loue with the Dukes son, & the son to lou *the Ladies waiting maid*: some such crosse woeing, with a Clown to their seruing man, better than to be thus neare and familiarl allied to the time,

and in Cordatus' answer he displays his own attitude:

> *You say well, but I would faine heare one of these Autumn* [illegible]

With *Cynthia's Revels* Jonson shows a certain decaden in his art. His treatment of the allegorical and mythic material is uninspired and uninteresting, although th opening with its pleasant little ditty sung by Echo charming enough. Again satire of literary oddities and literary rivals fills almost the entirety of the play. *Poetast*

continues in the same strain, Marston as Crispinus occupying the centre of the story, with Dekker as Demetrius Fannius, his second in command. Jonson himself is presented as the poet Horace. There are some good things in this comedy, but as a whole it fails to arouse in us the interest excited by a reading of *Every Man in his Humour*. The satire was growing too strong for the author. The men who "did provoke" him "with their petulant stiles on every stage" had made him forget the best of his art.

Jonson's next play, *Volpone*, has none of this personal bitterness, but there is instead a marked deepening of his hatred at the follies and vices of his time. Hardly a single character in the whole play is virtuous or honest. Volpone himself, Corbaccio, Voltore, Lady Politick Would-bee, and the rest are rapacious, licentious, vicious, so that the play as a whole, although it is excellently constructed and has a unity of aim finer than that of any of Jonson's previous plays, shows both the growing corruption of the age and the natural tendency of the satirist to widen his range of observation and to intensify in his own mind the vices at which he merely mocked before. So Swift passed from the land of Lilliput to the country of the Houyhnhnms. This note of deepened horror is continued in *The Alchemist* and in *Bartholomew Fair*, two of his finest comedies. In the former all the men are either rascally or avaricious, the women vain and libertine; in the latter Jonson's lash falls with no sparing hand upon the Puritans and on current hypocrisy. These are among the best comedies in the English language, but the coarseness and even the brutality of Jonson's later style detract considerably from their beauty. There is not here the high idealism of a Swift to atone for the ugliness; there is only the rather rough disgust of a robust but unrefined man at "vulgar errors."

(ii) Chapman and Dekker

Apart from *Epicoene*, a singularly bright comedy in the midst of this darkness, Jonson's work finished with these plays. His later comedies are all weak and marred by

exaggeration and extravagance. In these earlier works, however, he had set his mark on the age, and many essayed to follow him in his own style. Among these the classically minded George Chapman is by no means the least. Chapman was born about 1560, and was writing for the stage in 1596; he died in 1634. Of his plays the earliest extant is *The Blinde Begger of Alexandria, most pleasantly discoursing his variable humours in disguised shapes full of Conceite and pleasure* (1596; printed 1598). This is followed by a series of others: *A pleasant Comedy entituled: An Humerous dayes Myrth* (1597; printed 1599), *The Gentleman Usher* (c. 1602; printed 1606), *Al Fooles* (c. 1604; printed 1605), *Monsieur D'Olive* (1604; printed 1606), *Eastward Hoe* (1605; printed in 1605 as by Chapman, Jonson, and Marston), *May-Day* (c. 1609; printed 1611), *The Widdowes Teares* (c. 1609; printed 1612), as well as *The Ball* (1632; printed 1639), written in collaboration with Shirley. The first of these is a poor work, and shows the twin influence of the romantic and realistic schools. The blind beggar is a certain Cleanthes in disguise, a noble banished and beloved by Queen Ægiale. This gentleman seems to have a propensity for masquerades, for in the course of the play he appears as a Count and as Leon, marrying in these shapes both Elmine and Samathis. In the end, as Cleanthes, he defeats the enemies of Egypt and succeeds in providing his superfluous wives with husbands in the persons of a couple of kings. *An Humorous Day's Mirth* shows a slight advance in its well-developed plot and interestingly displayed characters. This progress is still further marked in *The Gentleman Usher*, a comedy full of humorous types; the plot is certainly of the tragicomic sort, but the *dramatis personæ* belong mainly to the school of Jonson. In it Alphonso is an old duke who loves Margaret; the latter's affections are placed on Alphonso's son, Vincentio. Vincentio is aided by Strozza and persuades Bassiolo, the usher, to act for him. Alphonso's tool is Medice, who attempts the lives of both Strozza and Vincentio. Alongside of this romantic plot move the elderly, sack-loving widow Corteza, the foolish

Pogio, and the pedant Sarpego—a character, be it remarked, who bears a striking resemblance to old Polonius. *All Fools* marks a culmination in this upward movement. Here a certain spice of poetic fantasy is added to the realistic treatment of a theme taken from *Heautontimoroumenos*, but influenced unquestionably by *Every Man out of his Humour*. The plot is an interesting one, carried along two distinct lines. In the one, Gostanzo, the testy old father of the gay Valerio, who is married secretly to Gratiana, and of Bellanora, beloved by Fortunio, elder son of the indulgent Marc Antonio, tries his best to govern his children. His younger son, Rinaldo, informs him that Gratiana is married to Fortunio; nothing suspecting, he takes them to his house and there sees his own son Valerio kissing the wife. He is further deceived into telling Marc Antonio that the girl is married to his son. The other plot deals with the jealous Cornelio, baited by the rascally Rinaldo and Valerio. In the attempt to show various humours, and, further, in the effort to show those humours out-humoured, Chapman displays clearly his debt to Jonson's example. *Monsieur D'Olive* is somewhat more in the strain of *The Gentleman Usher*, the plot being partly serious in its development. Marcellina, owing to the jealousy of Count Vaumont, has vowed eternal seclusion. So, too, because of the death of his wife, Count S. Anne mourns constantly in solitude. Vandome discovers that the last mentioned is beloved by Eurione, and by a trick he draws the two hermits from their self-appointed retirement. This serious plot is coloured constantly by the humour surrounding Monsieur D'Olive, who is gulled by Rhoderique and Mugeron into believing he is a wit. In this play, as is evident, Chapman comes nearest to the romantic tragi-comic strain then so much in fashion. The compositely written *Eastward Ho* is a definite return to realism, allied to a moralizing touch in the presentation of the good apprentice Golding, marrying his master's daughter and loaded with honours, and of Quicksilver, rioting his goods away and ending in the hands of the watch. The plot is one of vice and folly, the various humours being well hit

off although not so exaggerated as are those in Jonson's comedies. A similar series of follies and vices is presented in *May Day*, with its boasting soldier in Quintiliano, a brother of Bobadill, its licentious old sinner in Lodovico and its rascally serving-men. *The Widow's Tears* is more interestingly individual. The plot of this, albeit set in some romantic realm, is thoroughly realistic. Tharsalio, the blunt wooer, wins, contrary to all belief, the newly widowed Countess Eudora, and Cynthia, Lysander's wife, shows a readiness to fall in love soon after her husband's death. The two women are intended to represent the weakness and fickleness of the female sex, Chapman's feelings in this regard being similar to those of Jonson; and his bitterness becomes almost nauseating in the tomb scene, where Cynthia embraces an unknown soldier in the very presence of her husband's coffin. The ugliness of the scene is, however, mitigated by the delightful ruse by which the wife, in imminent danger of being exposed, turns the tables nimbly upon her rightfully wrathful husband. Of *The Ball* it is impossible to determine accurately the portions of Chapman's and the portions of Shirley's workmanship. The theme of the play is slight, but the atmosphere of wit allied to the presentation of interesting characters in Mr Bostock and Colonel Winfield mark out the play as one of the best of Caroline comedies. It will be noted here that the general tone of comedy has considerably changed from the tone apparent in Chapman's early works. In general, Chapman shows himself one of the most capable dramatists of his time, a trifle heavy and rough on occasion, but with a fund of humour and a classically trained mind which can well determine the just proportions of a dramatic plot.

Along with him one might associate Jonson's hated rival, Thomas Dekker, one of the freshest and most delightful, if by no means one of the most gifted, theatrical writers of the time. Of his comic pieces *The Pleasant Comedie of Old Fortunatus* (1599; printed 1600) is a charmingly poetical piece, but his general style lay rather in the direction of realism. This style is to be traced in *The Shomakers*

Holiday. Or The Gentle Craft (1599; printed 1600), in *West-ward Hoe* (1604; printed 1607 as by Dekker and Webster), in *North-ward Hoe* (1605; printed 1607 as by the same two writers), in *The Roaring Girle. Or Moll Cut-Purse* (*c.* 1610; printed 1611 as by Dekker and Middleton), and in one or two other plays less worthy of detailed attention. The satirical strain is evident in *Satiro-mastix. Or The vntrussing of the Humorous Poet* (1601; printed 1602), no doubt the joint reply of Dekker and Marston to Jonson's taunts in his early comedies. It has been suggested, and it is conceivably possible, that one or two of the finer scenes in this play were penned by Shakespeare himself. There is, at least, contemporary record that that poet did retaliate to Jonson's taunts, and some episodes in *Satiromastix* show true marks of genius. *Satiromastix* brings us back to *Poetaster* and the rest; here Horace once more symbolizes Jonson, but this time Horace is not the poet he was in the former piece, but is presented as a dogmatic, conceited little versifier who endeavours to write by the aid of intellect and a kind of riming-dictionary. No more humorous scene can be discovered in the whole of this *Poetomachia* than that in which Horace is introduced leaning over his manuscripts in the act of penning an ode:

O me thy Priest inspire.
For I to thee and thine immortall name,
In—in—in golden tunes,
For I to thee and thine immortall name—
In—sacred raptures flowing, flowing, swimming, swimming:
In sacred raptures swimming,
Immortal name, game, dame, tame, lame, lame, lame,
Pux, hath, shame, proclaime, oh——
In Sacred raptures flowing, will proclaime, not——
O me thy Priest inspyre!
For I to thee and thine imortall name,
In flowing numbers fild with spright and flame,
Good, good, in flowing numbers fild with spright & f[illegible]

Dekker's real gifts, however, lay not in satire, b[illegible] realistic comedy. In this style h[illegible] does not [illegible] that of Jonson; his method is n[illegible] He has a peculiarly broad hu[illegible]

life, and his *forte* lies in a loving description of the lower world of London. He is a sentimental realist who, instead of seeking with the satirist for the vices of life, searches for the good This feature of his art is most evident in *The Shoemakers' Holiday* and in *The Roaring Girl.* The first of these, a deservedly popular play, introduces us to the entertaining circle of Simon Eyre and his merry shoemakers, who move in a world just tinged with the rosy hues of romance. The second presents a contemporary 'bluestocking,' Moll Cut-purse, in a sentimental spirit which is reminiscent of the writers of the eighteenth century. She is shown not as a thief and a vicious character, but as the reliever of the distressed and the humble knight (or dame) of honour. Nowhere more clearly is the sentimental note in the age pronounced. *Westward Ho* and *Northward Ho* are more realistic in the Jonsonian sense, and are decidedly less entertaining than Dekker's earlier individual efforts.

(iii) LATER REALISTIC COMEDY

The Jonsonian style with an added element of intrigue was taken over later by Fletcher, usually in association with Philip Massinger, and had already been adopted by Beaumont in one of his earliest dramas, *The Woman Hater* (c. 1606; printed 1607). This is an excellent comedy, well constructed and possessing a verve lacking in many of even the most realistic of these works. An interesting development is seen here in the elaboration of what may almost be counted a 'manners' note in the character of Oriana, with her airiness, her cleverness, and her wit; but the main atmosphere is that of 'humours,' Lazarillo, a courtier who adores strange viands, and Gondarino, the woman hater, providing most of the *vis comica* of the piece. Noticeable are the Pandar scenes, which are reminiscent of the brothel scenes in *Pericles*, and the figures of the intelligencers, who remind us of similar characters in *Much Ado*. *The Woman's Prize, or The Tamer Tam'd* (? c. 1605; printed 1647; ascribed to Fletcher alone) is a farcical sequel to *The Taming of the Shrew*. Here Petruchio is

carried to London, where he marries an English wife, and is, as the title indicates, subjugated by her. In *The Coxcomb* (*c.* 1609; printed 1647; ascribed to Beaumont and Fletcher with possible revision by another) there is more of a romantic note, as there is in *The Honest Mans Fortune* (1613; printed 1647; ascribed to Fletcher and Massinger), but the pure comic note reappears in *Wit Without Money* (*c.* 1614; printed 1639, ascribed to Fletcher alone), where the manners style is in even greater evidence. Gaiety, not bitterness, predominates in this play, the hero being a witty, impoverished, and fearless Valentine, who is in the end captured by the widow. The anti-matrimonial mood, the wit and the lightness of heart, differentiate this play from the Jonsonian model, and provide an intermediate link between the realistic comedy of 1600 and that of 1670. More of the satiric note is struck in *The Scornful Ladie* (*c.* 1615; printed 1616; ascribed to Beaumont and Fletcher, with the possibility of a Massinger revisal). *The Scornful Lady* is a well-wrought comedy, although the character of the lady, who is loved by Elder Loveless, is somewhat strained. The latter, stung by her disdain, sets out on a voyage, leaving the riotous Younger Loveless his estate. News of his death is brought home, and the rascally brother rejoices. This theme is complicated not only by a series of humours in the persons of Morecraft the usurer, Abigal the wanton maid, and Savil the faithful steward debauched by Younger Loveless, but by many intrigues. After a series of disguisings and cross-purposes Elder Loveless marries the Lady; Welford, another suitor, her sister Martha; and Younger Loveless the Widow. The play is a clever one, but shows all the callousness and vice accumulating upon the age. We are far now from the pleasant freshness of *All Fools* or *The Shoemakers' Holiday*. *Wit at several weapons* (date uncertain; printed 1647; ascribed to Fletcher and another unidentified author) is even more Jonsonian in style. Here Sir Perfidious Oldcraft destines his niece for Sir Gregory Fopp. She eventually succeeds in marrying Cunningham. The humours of the two first named are added to by the clownish folly of Pompey

Doodle, the rascality of Witty-pate Oldcraft, the outworn gentility of Sir Ruinous Gentry, and the obtuseness of Credulous. Jonsonian humours of a kind come into *The Little French Lawyer* (c. 1619; printed 1647; ascribed to Fletcher and Massinger), particularly in the title figure of La Writt, who, from apparent timidity, develops into a *braggadocio*, but the atmosphere belongs in general rather to that of the romantic tragi-comedy. One of the most interesting plays of this series is *The Wild-Goose Chase* (1621; printed 1652; ascribed to Fletcher alone), which shows more clearly than any other play of the time the development of the manners style. The plot is one of intrigue, and humorous characteristics are to be traced in plenty, but that for which the comedy exists is the wit—no longer a wit of situation, but the genuine *esprit* that appears in Restoration dramas of a later date. The gaiety, the courtly dalliance, the anti-matrimonial humour of the hero, all point forward to the late seventeenth century. It was not mere chance that made Farquhar choose to adapt this play in his well-known comedy of manners, *The Inconstant*. This air of wit allied to high-flown theories concerning honour appears again in the tragi-comic *Nice Valour or The Passionate Madman* (? 1624; printed 1647; ascribed to Fletcher and another). Here Shamont, the Duke's favourite, has his mind filled with just such ideas as occupied the minds of Dryden's heroes. The portion of the play in which he and the Passionate Madman appear is more or less serious, but Jonsonian humour is shown plainly enough in the figure of Lapet, eternally engaged on his work concerning the taking of blows.

With Fletcher and his coadjutors we are no longer in the direct company of Jonson. Jonson is Elizabethan in his sturdiness, in his robust attitude toward life, Elizabethan even in his horror of vice. In Fletcher we can trace the weakening spirit of the age. Humours are copied from the earlier comedies, but not for the sake of satire; vice is indulged in for its own sake. Romanticism occasionally is employed to cover over situations nauseous and disgusting. Above all, comedy is moving in a new direction

toward wit. The Cavalier intellect is demanding something more than the manifestations of the comic exhibited in Elizabethan plays. With Fletcher, as we have seen, in wit, in callousness, in refined immorality, we are travelling from the largely emotional, coarser, yet fresher drama of the late sixteenth century to the borders of that territory which Etherege, Wycherley, and Congreve made their own.

In pure comedy Philip Massinger's unaided efforts have less of the airy tone infused into Fletcher's plays. He is a closer follower of Jonson's style. *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* (before 1626; printed 1633) is, indeed, one of the finest satiric dramas outside of Jonson's series. Massinger's masterpiece of portraiture is Sir Giles Overreach, a "cruel extortioner," who does not cease to live although he is a type. Overreach is, however, more individualistically delineated than the majority of Jonson's humours, and the influence of these humours is to be seen more plainly in the minor characters, Greedy, Marrall, Amble, Furnace, Watchall, Tapwell and Willdo. Deservedly the force of dialogue, the skill in construction, and the power of characterization in this drama have been unstintingly praised by Massinger's critics. Massinger's later comedy, *The City Madam* (1632; printed 1658), has something of the same force. Its didactic purpose it shares with *Eastward Ho*, the ambitious aims of Lady Frugal being satirized much as are those of Gertrude in the earlier play. The atmosphere of merchant-life is, likewise, in both the same, far enough away from Fletcher's gallant circles. There is little here of the spirit of the 'comedy of manners,' if we are to restrict that phrase to the only comedy to which it really belongs, the comedy of Congreve.[1]

Among the other writers in this style of realism, now frankly Jonsonian in inspiration, now moving toward the later style, only a few can be mentioned here, and those

[1] See p. 250; and *cf.* also *An Introduction to Dramatic Theory*, p. 184. The term 'manners' is very loosely used by most writers on the seventeenth century; examples of this loose use may be found in both Symonds and Schelling.

Gentleman (*c.* 1608; printed 1638) shows in its subject-matter and even in its atmosphere the influence of Dekker. *A New Wonder, A Woman never vext. A pleasant conceited Comedy* (date unknown; printed 1632) is probably a revision of an earlier play. Its chief interest is its serious and moral tone. The theme deals mainly with the imprisonment of Stephen, a character conceived in a distinctly sentimental strain. This Stephen, a spendthrift with a good heart, is released by Robert, his nephew, who is promptly disinherited by his over-righteous father, Old Foster. Stephen, on regaining his freedom, marries a rich widow, and Old Foster goes bankrupt. In his distress the father is aided by his son, and at length, like Lear, loses his self-righteous pride in a new sense of humanity. Jonson's influence is clearly to be seen in many of the characters, such as, for example, Innocent Lambskin and Sir Godfrey Speedwell; but Rowley felt too the impress of Shakespeare. The gilliflowers of Jane seem taken from *The Winter's Tale*, and the Host is a replica of the Host in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. The general atmosphere, however, is his own, with its intensely moral and sentimental colouring. *A Match at Midnight* (date unknown; printed 1633) likewise seems to be a revised play, written originally, according to many critics, by Middleton. It is a mixture of the Jonsonian style moving toward the world of manners, and of intrigue. Bloodhound, a miser, is the chief character; he plans to marry the Widow, who has many suitors, but whose husband is eventually discovered in Jarvis. Bloodhound's daughter, Moll, marries Ancient Young, and Tim is paired off with Sue. The theme is a common one of marriage hunting and marriage deceits, but the number of passages which exist for the sake of their wit alone mark this comedy as moving in the same direction as those of Fletcher.

A comedy more of the intrigue type is given us in Jasper Mayne's *The Citye Match* (printed 1639), a fair work spoilt by too many disguises and complications. The only really well-drawn character in it is Aurelia, but the scenes wherein we are shown how Warehouse is cheated by his witty

nephew Plotwell are full of good fun. Infinitely less agreeable is Thomas Killigrew's *The Parson's Wedding* (1640; printed 1664), as foul a production as can be imagined. It would not have been mentioned here save that it forms a fitting illustration of the rapid degeneracy of the times. There is little wit in the dialogue, and the comedy as a whole can make an appeal only to those who place vulgarity in the stead of art. An interesting play of a more satirical tone is the anonymous *Lady Alimony, or the Alimony Lady* (printed 1659) with its peculiar structure and valuable comments on current conditions. *The Antiquary* (printed 1641) of Shackerley Marmion has in the midst of its atmosphere of humours something of a romantic touch. The disguising of the Duke reminds us of the adventures of a Haroun al-Raschid; but the characters of Lionel, the Antiquary, Petruchio, and Mocinigo are all conceived after the Jonsonian manner.

Such single comedies of varying characteristics recede in importance when we come to consider the realistic works of that last representative of the Elizabethans, James Shirley. Shirley is not always satiric in his art, but he does follow Jonson in introducing into many of his plays a distinctly contemporary tone. His very first play, *The Schoole of Complement* (1625; printed 1631), is in this style. A typically youthful production, it has no inherent unity, but passes from theme to theme in a hopelessly inconsequent manner. The main subject, however—the fantastic school where young gallants are taught to pay the most highly flowered compliments—is freshly and entertainingly treated. A more artistic construction is to be seen in *The Wittie Faire One* (1632; printed 1633), a comedy of considerable excellence, and at the same time full of that intellectual gallantry which at its best rises to wit and at its worst sinks to crass vulgarity. The attitude of the sexes to one another is to be noted in these plays of Shirley and in other dramas of the time. In the Middle Ages the Courts of love had made of woman an ideal, sometinng apart from life; the Renascence brought with it the conception of masculine and feminine equality. For a time in the

Elizabethan period that equality was viewed in the light of emotion and passion; but as the age moved forward intellect came to take the place of this emotion, and common sense reigned. Nowhere, possibly, is this common-sense and intellectual attitude to be seen more clearly than in Shirley's comedies of social life. "Come," says the gallant Fowler to Penelope in this particular play, "remember you are imperfect creatures without a man; be not you a goddess; I know you are mortal, and had rather make you my companion than my idol; this is no flattery now." The atmosphere of Rosalind and Orlando, of Ferdinand and Miranda, has become a thing of the past. Shirley's comedies of later date all continue in the same strain. *Changes: Or Love in a Maze* (1632) was deservedly famous in its own time, and is noteworthy for the witty satire presented through the medium of Caperwit. *Hide Parke* (1632; printed 1637) deals again with a contemporary world of wit, and *The Lady of Pleasure* (1635; printed 1637) makes clever use of contemporary social follies. The latter play contains an interesting study of a woman type later to occupy many comedies; Celestina has many of the features of heroines in the comedy of manners.

Among the lesser writers—the works of whom may be noted here without much comment—Nathaniel Field, the actor, and Richard Brome deserve first mention. Field had been a performer in several of Jonson's plays, and it is not surprising to find that humours predominate in *A Woman is a Weathercocke* (1610; printed 1612) and in *Amends for Ladies* (c. 1611; printed 1618). Both show the influence of Shakespeare besides that of Jonson, and, charming as are many of the scenes, it cannot be denied that Field has failed to discover a flux which might fuse together these so opposing elements. His two plays are carelessly constructed and preserve their interest only for separate scenes or passages of dialogue.

Richard Brome is even more Jonsonian in his efforts—a natural outcome of the fact that he had been for some years a servant to the great Ben. Several of his plays remained popular successes well on into the eighteenth

century, and it is to be recognized that he had no small talent for the stage. Most important of all, he had a certain inventive power which led him to draw the Jonsonian comedy, as Fletcher did, toward the realm of the comedy of manners, and this in spite of a decidedly coarser style and outlook than that exhibited by his master. Of his nineteen plays two may be mentioned here, *The Northern Lass* (printed 1632), and *A Jovial Crew: Or, The Merry Beggars* (acted 1641; printed 1652). The first was Brome's greatest effort and shows him, like Field, engaged in the endeavour to fuse together the satirical strain of Jonson and some elements of romantic fervour. The second has great interest because of its picturesque theme, which is treated with all the naturalness and vitality which such a subject usually demands.

A brief backward glance at the general contents of this chapter will serve to show that the Jonsonian satiric comedy in its purest form did not find very many direct successors. On the other hand, there were several movements in drama between 1600 and 1642 which often connected with his style. There was first the bourgeois comedy of the Dekker type, which dealt in a somewhat sentimental way with the lives of the lower and middle classes. This form of comedy is one of the most delightful that the age produced, but it was destined to be crushed out of existence by the vice and corruption rapidly growing upon the Cavalier element in society. The comedy of intrigue, too, frequently adopted a realistic instead of a romantic tone, and so merged with the Jonsonian type. This comedy of intrigue, however, dealt usually with upper-class characters, and out of it there developed, inspired by the changing tastes and manners of the time, a sort of comedy of manners, not fully dissociated as yet from the rougher forms of earlier drama, but leading forward toward Etherege. Nearly all the realistic comedies are marred by coarseness and vulgarity, thus displaying the evil that was growing in power throughout these years; but in spite of that vulgarity we must recognize that the realism served a good purpose in its day. It helped to keep drama close to real life at a time

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when many writers were striving by their romantic plots and characters to make of the theatre an artificial and fantastic thing, and its very coarseness aided in preserving a touch of moral sanity as opposed to the decadent emotions and lubricity of the Fords and others who descended to the most disgusting and nauseating of sexual emotions. The satire in the Jonson drama did little good directly in the way of mitigating the abuses of the age, but it proved a most salutary element in the world of the theatre.

CHAPTER IV

SHAKESPEARIAN TRAGEDY

FROM the above rapid analysis of comedy and of tragi-comedy in the first half of the seventeenth century a return must be made to the realm of tragedy, where will be found exemplified in varying ways many of the tendencies which have already been noted in the other forms of drama. This period includes the chief works of Shakespeare, and it must be our endeavour to regard those works for their own sakes and for their importance as documents in the consideration of dramatic history.

The series of Shakespearian tragedies (considered apart from the history plays) starts well back in the sixteenth century with the doubtful drama entitled *The most Lamentable Romaine Tragedie of Titus Andronicus* (1594), and proceeds through the *Excellent conceited Tragedie of Romeo and Iuliet* (? 1595; printed 1597), *The Tragedie of Iulius Cæsar* (1599; printed 1623), *The Tragicall Historie of Hamlet Prince of Denmarke* (? 1601; printed 1603 and 1604), *The Historie of Troylus and Cresseida* (? 1602; printed 1609, and as a "Tragedie" 1623), *The Tragœdy of Othello* (? 1604; printed 1622), *The Tragedie of Macbeth* (c. 1606; printed 1623), the *True Chronicle Historie of the life and death of King Lear and his three Daughters* (1605; printed 1608), *The Tragedie of Anthonie, and Cleopatra* (c 1606; printed 1623), and *The Tragedy of Coriolanus* (c. 1606; printed 1623) to *The Lyfe of Tymon of Athens* (c. 1607; printed 1623). As is obvious, *Titus Andronicus* and *Romeo and Juliet* stand apart by reason of their date and their consequently independent characteristics, while in the greater group we find two classes of plays, the Roman tragedies and the four masterpieces, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Macbeth*, and *King Lear*. It may, for our purpose, be most convenient to discuss these plays in their separate sections.

Titus Andronicus has probably but little to do with Shakespeare; if it has large parts from his pen the sooner it is forgotten the better. Thoroughly melodramatic, full of the most blood-curdling horrors, it conveys no evidence of a settled idea in the author's mind as to the true nature of tragedy. Its one aim is to shock the audience by the most horrible means possible, and in this it certainly succeeds. Had it not been included in the Shakespeare canon it is unquestionable that all critics of the Elizabethan drama would either have ignored it or styled it one of the most revolting plays of the late sixteenth century. As an historical document, on the other hand, it has its own interest. It shows to us the crude tastes of the spectators of Shakespeare's time, for, in view of the fact that three quartos were issued before the appearance of the First Folio text of 1623, we cannot but believe it to have been a popular drama. Love of crude horror is evidently as marked a feature of the audience of 1595 as love of artistically stressed horror is of the audience of 1635.

Romeo and Juliet, on the other hand, is a true work of dramatic art, even if there are in it many failings due to the inexperience of the writer. Its lyrical passion at times rises to the heights of ecstasy, and the comic matter, both of the more refined sort in Mercutio and of the coarser texture in the Nurse, is excellently managed. This tragedy is obviously a young man's effort and shows the fullness of Renascence thought and passion. In spite of its lyricism it is of the earth. There is no spiritual message here, no mental struggles, no wearied emotion that almost reaches the levels of mysticism as in *Macbeth* and in *Hamlet*. The love of Romeo and Juliet is an earthly passion, and the whole colour of the play is rich with those dazzling hues which we associate with fifteenth-century Italy. These features separate *Romeo* markedly from the later tragedies; but there are besides these features of difference of even greater importance. Here Shakespeare has not as yet formulated his true tragic spirit. He is filled with the joy of Renascence imaginings; his poetry flows in a clear stream of impassioned eloquence; but of higher conception

there is none. The tragedy of *Romeo and Juliet* might, after all, have been a comedy. Mercutio did not need to die; little lies between the two lovers and a happy existence. There is nothing wrong in their actions; there is nothing wrong in their grasping at this youthful passion. They are merely star-crossed; fate and even chance thwart their best-considered plans. They are mere puppets in the hands of a power greater and more majestic than themselves. This form of tragedy of fate is the typical type of Greek drama; but there are æons between the spirit of *Œdipus* and the spirit of *Romeo.* The Greek tragedy owed its greatness partly to the awful religious conceptions of the time, to the idea of some power or powers governing human lives and human actions, partly to the fusion of mortal error, the *ἁμαρτία* of Aristotle, with this fatal power. With Shakespeare fate as such is simply not conceived; we do not rise from a reading of *Romeo and Juliet* with the feeling that some tremendous power stands over our petty lives; we rise with the feeling that some blind chance has obstructed wildly the deeds of these two lovers. There is not the profound majesty of Greek drama leading to emotions that are full of terror and sublimity; there are only the petty movements of a conscienceless power that leave us rebellious and dissatisfied. *Romeo and Juliet* is a fine tragedy, but it is such only because of the poetry that breathes in its every scene. It is Shakespeare's greatest *tour de force.*

In *Hamlet* and the other three plays of his highest power this atmosphere is changed for another, in which there is evidence that there had come to him a new conception of tragedy. Here fate may be suggested, but fate causes the downfall of none of these tragic heroes. Their fate, after all, is their own, and remains their own even while we recognize that each is faced with peculiar and for him insurmountable difficulties. There is here, that is to say, the same union of fate and human failing which is to be discovered in Sophocles. An outline, even a brief outline, of the fundamental forces in each of these four plays would occupy much more space than this volume can afford.

These are plays, moreover, with which almost every one is acquainted, and it may be sufficient for our purpose here to indicate briefly some of the ways in which these dramas fall in with the general theatrical tendencies of the time.

Hamlet, as has been hinted before, is an offspring of Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy*. Whether Kyd himself wrote a tragedy on this theme is uncertain; but we know of the existence of a 'Hamlet' play at least as early as the year 1589. Henslowe's lists inform us that it was revived in 1594. The probability is that this "*Ur-Hamlet*" was the production of Shakespeare himself and was the foundation of the later *Hamlet*, reworked about 1601 and later revised about 1602. This tragedy, then, belongs to the series of revenge plays inaugurated by Kyd about 1589. The first *Hamlet*, as we know from the 1603 quarto, possessed little of the introspective philosophy of the later; in action it was similar to the other, but it lacked almost entirely those higher qualities which have seized upon the imaginations of all ages from the Elizabethan to the present day. These introspective meditations, however, would not seem to have been of Shakespeare's own invention. The play of *Hamlet* would probably have been almost entirely forgotten had it not been for the production in 1599 of Marston's *History of Antonio and Mellida* (printed 1602), followed by *Antonios Reuenge* (printed the same year). Both of these are crude plays, but together they display some peculiar and remarkable characteristics. In the first Antonio appears disguised as an Amazon, revealing himself only to Mellida. His disguise is discovered by Piero, and he only just succeeds in escaping in the habit of a sailor. Mellida flies after him, but is captured; and Piero closes the play by pretending to let his vengeful thoughts die. The second part is full of torment. Piero treacherously poisons Andrugio, murders Feliche, slanders his own daughter, and makes love to Maria. Antonio is faced by the spirit of his father, and plots his revenge. He succeeds first in murdering the little Julio and then gets Piero killed in a masque. The plot is incoherent and difficult to follow;

none of the characters are satisfactorily delineated; but certain features attract our interest. There is, in the first place, the ghost of a murdered father appearing to a son; there is plenty of feigned madness; there is a general disgust at life; there is the weakness of a mother; there is a play within a play; and there are, besides, passages which were evidently in Shakespeare's mind in this richest period of his career. It is not too much to say that in *Antonio and Mellida* we have evidence that the melancholy and apparent disgust at the world of which so much has been made by the more sentimental and imaginative biographers of Shakespeare was nothing more or less than a literary pose probably aroused by the success of Marston's dramas. In *Hamlet* Shakespeare has taken over the *Antonio and Mellida* atmosphere, and has made it live; he has given to the revenge theme a higher purpose; he has, above all, formulated for tragedy a central and a dominant aim. It is peculiar to note that in this play, which seems so filled with deepest and profoundest expression of tragic thoughts, Shakespeare should have introduced a scene which at once links the drama as a whole to the *Poetaster-Satiromastix* controversy. The quarrel between the adult players and the children for whom Jonson was at that time writing is inserted, without any thought of historical accuracy, into the midst of *Hamlet's* meditations—an artistic defect, but one which serves to prove still further the independence of Shakespeare in this world of gloomy thoughts and suicidal imaginings.

Othello presents an entirely different set of characteristic elements. Here is no gloom, but passion of the most tremendous sort. Shakespeare's central purpose in tragedy is, however, still preserved; once more the tragedy is a variation on a set theme. *Othello* is notable for its structure, a structure determined no doubt by the nature of the plot, but at the same time possibly showing the influence of the new theories concerning play construction which at the time were being put forward by Jonson and others of the neo-classical school. *Othello* has interest, moreover, because of its theme. *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and *King Lear* deal with

princely characters and scenes; *Othello* presents to us a Moorish general, a high-born Venetian maiden, and a distinctly low-born ancient. The atmosphere of the tragedy is decidedly not 'royal,' and it may be that here there was being exercised on Shakespeare some influence from the group of domestic tragedies later to be considered.

In *Macbeth* there are many problems. The structure is not nearly so fine as that of *Othello*, but in the swiftness of its opening and in its gradual close it appears almost a counterpart to the other play. The text is certainly not so good as that of *Othello*, and it is possible that we have to make allowances for later additions inserted by some unthinking and sacrilegious writer. In *Macbeth* we find the same cardinal tragic idea, exemplified this time in the figure of a noble but ambitious and weak-willed Scottish general. Unquestionably the theme approved itself to Shakespeare because of the recent ascension to the throne of James VI of the house of Stuart. Topical references designed to flatter the pedantic and superstitious monarch abound in this play. James had written a book on *Demonology*, and so witches appear. The curing of the 'King's evil' is narrated at a time of emotional stress quite needlessly. A plain allusion to the union of the crowns is introduced into the prophetical visions called into being by the three weird hags. We can hardly imagine that Shakespeare drew in all of these because he thought they would improve his play; yet *Macbeth* remains one of the greatest tragedies of all time.

With *King Lear* we note a distinct retrogression, in spite of many deep thoughts and a characterization unequalled in Shakespeare's other works. For some reason the firmly knit structure of *Othello* is forgotten; and a reversion is made to the old formless technique of the chronicle history. There is little of the concentration of unity visible in the two preceding tragedies, and as a consequence *Lear* is less of a dramatic masterpiece than those. It possesses epic characteristics ill adapted for stage representation. This, of course, does not take away from the fact that *Lear* is one of the greatest of all works of genius; as a dramatic

poem it has never been surpassed, even if as a drama it has many weaknesses and blemishes. In regard to the subject of this play it may be noted that Shakespeare once more seems to have been following a fashion of the time.

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of the same type proved extremely successful on the stage, the love for such plays enduring to as late a date as 1633, when Jasper Fisher's *Fuimus Troes* was presented at Oxford.

Turning to the Roman plays we find no fewer points of relationship with current fashion. The Renascence was partly at least a revival of interest in classical life and literature, so that it was but natural that some attention should be paid to works such as Plutarch's *Lives*. Romanticists and classicists here met as one, Ben Jonson penning his *Sejanus* and *Catiline*, Fletcher his *Valentinian*, Massinger his *Roman Actor*, and Shakespeare his *Julius Cæsar* and *Coriolanus*.

Julius Cæsar, derived directly from North's rendering of Plutarch with very questionable hints from Appian's *Civil Wars*, was written on the most popular of all these Roman themes. The figure of Cæsar himself, his association with Britain, and the tragic story of his death all contributed to make this a subject eminently acceptable to English audiences. In this tragedy we can discern Shakespeare just on the borders of his greatest and fullest utterance. There are many finely drawn characters in the play; there is a certain unity of conception; but as a whole the drama just fails to rise to the heights of true tragic dignity. There

is to be regarded as the main figure on whom the tragic action devolves we find that Shakespeare's conception is not

that which is exemplified in his immediately following plays. Brutus is not faced with a difficulty he cannot master. He is placed in a dilemma and acts in the only way possible for him. This difference in idea takes away from the emotion of tremendous awe which is visible in the other tragedies. We realize that

> This was the Noblest Roman of them all:
> All the Conspirators saue onely hee,
> Did that they did, in enuy of great *Cæsar*:
> He, onely in a generall honest thought,
> And common good to all, made one of them,

but we cannot summon up in ourselves the true tragic passion in witnessing his fall. The same dissatisfaction is left in our minds as when we witness *Romeo and Juliet*. At the same time, we may see Shakespeare moving in this play toward his final conception of tragedy. He interweaves into the force of character the force of supernatural powers. Cæsar and Brutus meet their deaths through their own actions and through the actions of other men; yet there is continually hinted in the play that somehow the happenings of this earth are related to unseen and tremendous presences. The warning given to Cæsar, the apparitions in the streets of Rome, all add to this feeling. Shakespeare has moved from the realm of direct and somewhat crude enunciation to that of artistic and subtle suggestion.

Leaving *Troilus and Cressida* for the moment we come next to *Antony and Cleopatra*, written after the series of *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Macbeth*, and *King Lear*, and forming as it were a sequel to the first Roman play. In structure *Antony and Cleopatra* belongs to the type of *King Lear*. It is formed on the plan of the chronicle history, and, fine as the drama is, one is tempted to believe that had it been written alongside of *Othello* it would have taken on an added dignity and majesty of conception. This, it is to be noted, is the only one tragedy of Shakespeare's maturity which deals with the theme of love. Love in general is fatal to the true tragic atmosphere, as may be seen in the pitiful plays of the early eighteenth century; and Shakespeare,

consciously or unconsciously, has sought to make harder the impression of the play as a whole by emphasizing the essential nobility of the hero and heroine at the close. The tragedy lies in Cleopatra's ill-use of that charm which even her critics could not but realize would never be withered by age or staled by custom. Nor would it have been to Shakespeare's purpose to have made her merely a fascinating syren; in the last scene when, Antony lost, she applies the asp to her arm Shakespeare has retained almost unaltered the original words of Plutarch, from whose general conception of Cleopatra's character he had in the main consistently differed. So, too, Antony's greatness is revealed to us even in the moments of his vacillation.

> Come,
> Let's haue one other gawdy night!

he cries before the final battle which is to undo him; yet a moment before he had shown himself a very Macbeth in his true martial enthusiasm:

> I will be trebble-sinewed, hearted breath'd.

Antony and Cleopatra will assuredly remain one of the most tremendous of all love tragedies; yet even Shakespeare could not raise the type to the height of his other masterpieces. It is beautiful; but it has not the rich gloom and august colouring of his other works.

If *Antony and Cleopatra* is somewhat too rich in some of its scenes, *Coriolanus* is at times rather austere. The structure of the play is by no means neo-classical, yet the general atmosphere is nearer to *Sejanus* than to *Julius Cæsar.* Once more Shakespeare turned to deal with a theme of pride, even as he had done in *King Lear,* for it is obviously the pride, the love of reputation, and the contempt of popular opinion of Coriolanus which brings about his downfall. He is thoroughly disgusted at anything which savours of outward flattery, as when he declares that he

> Had rather haue one scratch my Head i' th' Sun,
> When the Alarum were strucke, then idly sit
> To heare my Nothings monster'd,

and yet he delights unconsciously in the esteem in which

he is, and in which he feels he ought to be, held. In this he differs from the praise-loving Lear, but he shares Lear's lack of subtlety, as when he sweeps aside the moderate counsel of Menenius, or as when he pours out the torrent of his wrath on the senators of Corioli:

> Boy, false Hound:
> If you haue writ your Annales true, 'tis there,
> That like an Eagle in a Doue-co[a]t, I
> Flutter'd your Volcians in *Corioles.*
> Alone I did it, Boy.

Coriolanus is the last of this great group of tragedies. *Timon,* which followed, is manifestly an incoherent production and almost certainly was tampered with by some one after Shakespeare had written it. As it stands, it in no wise deserves to be considered along with the rest. We are left, therefore, with the strange *Troilus and Cressida.* The story is a medieval one, but Shakespeare, like Chaucer, no doubt received it as equally authentic with Homer's *Iliad.* This theme has something of the same appeal as those of early British heroes. The love of Trojan valour goes along with the desire to trace in the English race relics of the burning Ilium. In this play are mingled lyricism, coarseness, satire, and a seeming pessimism; but the combination cannot be used to illustrate Shakespeare's mood at the time of writing it. To present the Greeks as cowards tallies [illegible] the adulation of the Trojans; to adopt a dark[illegible] tow[illegible] life and love merely follows a curre[illegible] for m[illegible]y. At the same time, the play [illegible] a [illegible]e, and possibly Sir Walter Raleig[illegible] portions of it were writte[illegible] *and* [illegible]*liet* was being penne[illegible] explanation of the [illegible] work. By this th[illegible]ion and of utte[illegible]ted for. *Troilus* [illegible] is full of the mos[illegible] fails to secure [illegible] great [illegible] W

Shakespeare's endeavour in tragedy has thus been seen to be broad and variegated, but from an analysis of his chief plays we can perhaps indicate in a summary form some of the main elements in his conception of tragic drama. [illegible]

alongside of mental conflict. *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* are melodramas if we consider their plots alone, but derive their greatness from the union of thought and emotion with action. (4) The tragic hero is placed in a position such as no other character in the tragedy holds. He becomes not [illegible]

development. No one succeeded in catching the true spirit of his drama, although many of his immediate followers borrowed hints from him, and revealed in phrase and scene and character the influence of his example.

CHAPTER V

THE REVENGE PLAY

THE type of drama of which *Hamlet* is an example proved so popular all through the early seventeenth century that a separate chapter is required for a consideration of the form. We have already glanced at three specimens of this class, *The Spanish Tragedy, Antonio and Mellida*, and *Hamlet*; perhaps *Alphonsus* and *The Jew of Malta* might be included as a fourth and a fifth. Before the end of the sixteenth century many dramas of this species must have been in existence, but the majority of these have irretrievably perished. The popularity of the revenge play is probably due to two forces, usually antagonistic to one another—the romantic love of incident and the neo-classic desire to follow Greek and Latin models. The one found satisfaction in witnessing the duplicities and scenes of horror which inevitably are associated with this type of drama; the other was delighted to see some following of Sophoclean and Senecan models. In mentioning Sophocles it must, of course, be remembered that in Elizabethan times knowledge of the Greek dramatists was extremely limited. Occasionally one can trace what appear to be reminiscences of scenes in Athenian plays, but for the most part the Greek influence was exerted at second-hand. Seneca, after all, was for the Elizabethans the classic dramatist *par excellence*, and from him they took their revenge themes, their ghosts, and their horrors. Orestes and Atreus became the models for all the Hieronimos and the Hamlets of the age. This delight in the revenge themes may have another cause. The Elizabethans, subconsciously, were eager to witness the revelation of peculiar states of mind, and those peculiar states of mind could nowhere better be shown than in plays of this type. They had a strange love of melancholy, and melancholy is often

associated with the desire for revenge. In all ways, therefore, the revenge form was bound to prove popular, and exercised its fascination on men of such diverse genius as Kyd, Marston, Shakespeare, Webster, and Tourneur.

Among the earlier dramas built on this theme Henry Chettle's *The Tragedy of Hoffman or A Revenge for a Father* (c. 1602; printed 1631) is one of the most interesting, if not one of the best written, with its bloody-minded hero who fails in his full purpose only through his fatal flaw in loving a woman who in the end causes his ruin. Chapman is another who gave variety to the type in his tragedy called *The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois* (c. 1610; printed 1613), the sequel to *Bussy D'Ambois* (1604; printed 1607). Although not connected with this in the adoption of a revenge story, Chapman's other tragedies may here be mentioned—*The Conspiracie, and Tragedie of Charles Duke of Byron* (1608) and *The Tragedie of Chabot Admirall of France* (c. 1613; printed 1639). The remarkable points about these four plays are the choice of themes from almost contemporary French history and the peculiar presentation of character. The first is a fine poetic tragedy, lacking only in a general unity of impression. The characterization of Bussy himself is well carried out, although his *liaison* with Tamyra, the wife of Montsurry, hardly entitles him to favour in modern eyes. His death seems not the result of a human failing, but well merited because of his own actions. In the sequel Baligny and Clermont D'Ambois are displayed as revenge heroes plotting the ruin of those who had dispatched the latter's brother The plot moves forward in a series of hesitating steps Clermont is arrested, but released again. He succeeds in murdering Montsurry, and finally commits suicide after securing the death of the Guise. The Umbra Bussy is presented on the stage in time-honoured manner, but its crudeness, when contrasted with the subtlety of Shakespeare's method, rather spoils the general tone of the play. The Byron drama is noteworthy mainly for its delineation of the hero's character, particularly in his last scenes, and might in this respect be compared with *Chabot*. In the latter Chapman deals

as in *Bussy D'Ambois* with Court rivalry and the opposing forces of evil and honesty. Chabot is tried, and his enemies, with their corrupt practices, are exposed, but he dies of a broken heart because of the suspicion of his King. The theme has interest in the presentation of a low-born favourite who, instead of engaging in corrupt intrigues and self-aggrandisement, is the very mirror of uprightness and honesty. The play fails, however, because of the very goodness of the hero. All of Chapman's dramas have this central deficiency. Tragedy for him is merely a tale of opposing forces, ending in death; it is not the record of a mental conflict or the ruin consequent on some human failing. He has none of Shakespeare's subtlety, none of Shakespeare's high conception of drama.

With many variations the revenge theme was taken up by other dramatists. It appears, for example, in a slightly disguised and novel form in Beaumont and Fletcher's *The Maides Tragedy* (*c.* 1611; printed 1619), a play obviously reminiscent of Shakespeare, but showing the decaying fabric of the age. The plot is a simple one. Amintor is married by the King's command to Evadne. He discovers that in reality she is the unashamed mistress of his monarch. Thoughts of revenge surge in upon him, only to be stifled at the thought of that divinity which hedges in a king. Evadne, however, is herself wrought into repentance, and in her horror she murders her lover, only to realize that her crime repels her friends from her. The interest in peculiar marital and sexual relationships is here; there are the stock characters of the later drama; there is the rich poetry surrounding objectionable themes. We cannot but confess that this is a finely written play; but at the same time we cannot admit that it is a great tragedy. Its atmosphere, in spite of the intensity of the passions, is close to that of the romantic tragi-comedy. Several other of the Beaumont and Fletcher series may also be considered here. The weakness that lies in the direct introduction of the supernatural and the close association between the worlds of romance and of tragedy in these years is plainly exemplified in *Cupid's Revenge* (? 1612; printed 1615), a play of tragic

import, but wanting entirely in the true spirit of tragedy proper. Here a Duke's daughter denies the power of Cupid. The god, resenting this slight, comes to the earth and causes her to fall in love with a dwarf and eventually die of grief. The action is further complicated by the fact that Cupid, not content with this vengeance, makes the son love Bacha, a prostitute, and concludes by causing the Duke to marry her. The intrigues of this woman lead to a universal catastrophe. *The Bloody Brother, or Rollo Duke of Normandy* (date uncertain; printed 1639; ascribed to Massinger, Fletcher, Jonson, and Field) likewise deals in part with a theme of revenge, and, in spite of an incoherence in structure due partly to the collaboration of various authors, deserves remembrance for the character of Edith. In *The Tragedy of Thierry King of France, and his Brother Theodoret* (date unknown; printed 1621; attributed to Fletcher and Massinger) there is again something of the revenge motive, allied to elements of decadence and horror. Brunhalt is a monster of vice and is angered by Theodoret's upbraidings. She flies to his brother Thierry, and at his Court peace is apparently made between the mother and the son. A marriage is arranged between Thierry and Ordella, and the mother gives him a disgusting drug, which she follows up with a murderous blow to one of her sons and a fatal dose of poison to the other. Many scenes in this play remind us forcibly of Shakespeare, particularly that last passage when Ordella, who, like Hero and Hermione, has been preserved by a friend when all believed her dead, wakens to utter a last few words to the expiring Thierry. The broken, short sentences, the phrases "Oh happy, happy soul . . . Can spirits weep too? . . . The same still, still your servant," recall at once the Lear-Cordelia scenes of earlier date. How far Fletcher had descended, however, is amply evident in this weakly constructed play. The delineation of character is little more than amateurish, Brunhalt being an impossible monster and Theodoret merely vapid. The murder of the latter in Act III is unpremeditated and wholly unexpected, and his last words are simply foolish. The tragedy is nothing

Duke. I loue that best, conduct her.
Vind. Haue at all.
Duke. In grauest lookes the Greatest faultes seeme lesse.
Giue me that sin thats rob'd in Holines.
Vind. Back with the Torch; brother raise the perfumes.
Duke. How sweete can a Duke breath? age has no fault,
Pleasure should meete in a perfumed mist,
Lady sweetely encountred, I came from Court I must
bee bould with you oh, what's this, oh!
Vind. royall villaine, white diuill: *Duke.* Oh.
Vind. Brother—place the Torch here, that his affrighted eye balls
May start into those hollowes, Duke; dost knowe
Yon dreadfull vizard, view it well, tis the skull
Of *Gloriana*, whom thou poysonedst last.
Duke. Oh, tas poysoned me.
Vind. Didst not know that till now?
Duke. What are you two?
Vind. Villaines all three! . . . the very ragged bone,
Has beine sufficiently reuengd.
Duke. Oh *Hippolito*? call treason
Hip. Yes my good Lord, treason, treason, treason.
[*stamping on him.*
Duke. Then I'me betrayde.
Vind. Alasse poor Lecher in the hands of knaues,
A slauish Duke is baser then his slaues.
Duke. My teeth are eaten out. *Vind.* Hadst any left.
Hip. I think but few.
Vind. Then those that did eate are eaten. *Duke.* O my tongue.
Vind. Your tongue? twill teach you to kisse closer,
Not like a Flobbering *Dutchman*, you haue eyes still:
Looke monster, what a Lady hast thou made me,
My once betrothed wife.
Duke. Is it thou villaine, nay then . . .
Vind. T'is I, 'tis *Vindici*, tis I.

In *The Atheist's Tragedy* we find a similar atmosphere, dark poetry of a lurid kind coexisting with the crudest of horrors. The theme, however, is treated in a novel way, for, though the ghost of his murdered father returns to Charlemont, it is to bid him abstain from vengeance. In the end occurs an unrefined but interesting scene in which D'Ambville, the atheist, repents and confesses his sins.

The revenge play, as we have seen, became confused with the horror drama, and possibly the two can hardly

be dealt with separately, but for the purpose of tracing the main tendencies in seventeenth-century dramatic art it may be well to make some quite indeterminate division between the two types, while bearing in mind the fact that many revenge plays exist mainly for the sake of their tormenting scenes and many purely horror dramas include some strains of revenge motive.

CHAPTER VI

17th c.

THE HORROR TRAGEDY

THE title of this chapter may to some appear a trifle arbitrary, and it is to be confessed that not all the plays here treated display the same characteristics; indeed, one may go farther and declare that not even all of them deal fundamentally with torment and horror. At the same time, this title seems best to indicate briefly the main tendencies operating upon the minds of many dramatists of the period and to delineate a general movement toward a weaker form of drama. The chief point in common among all the plays is the presence of a somewhat decadent mood and introduction of physical torture in and for itself. In *King Lear*, for example, the blinding of Gloucester can be dramatically justified; in most of these horror plays the scenes of torment do not further in any way the development of the plot. Moreover, in nearly all of these tragedies there is no attempt to secure a dominant tone; pathos is employed frequently, and there are the attempts at novelty in the delineation of the Courts of Roman emperors, as in Fletcher's *The Tragedie of Valentinian* (c. 1614; printed 1647), or those of Italian dukes, as in the plays of Massinger, or those of more romantic potentates, as in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Philaster* (c. 1610; printed 1620). Of true tragic expression in them there is, however, but little.

Massinger's four plays, *The Duke of Millaine* (printed 1623), *The Unnaturall Combat* (before 1623; printed 1639), *The Roman Actor* (1626; acted 1629), and *The Virgin Martir* (1620; printed 1622; written in collaboration with Dekker), may be regarded as some of the best dramas of a type between the Shakespearian and the decadent horror schools. The first contains a truly terrible villain in Francisco—one who can cry:

> Then we Raigne alone,
> For with this Arme I'le swim through Seas of blood,
> Or make a Bridge, arch'd with the bones of Men,
> But I will graspe my aymes in you my deerest,
> Deerest, and best of Women——

a threat which in the play he puts into execution; it contains, too, a scene of novel horror in the last act, when Francisco daubs the cheeks and lips of the dead Marcelia with poison and so contrives the death of Sforza. There are some touches of psychological insight in the play, but Massinger, as critics have often pointed out, does not really know men and women. His evil and his good alike leave us [illegible]
Sforza, [illegible]

[illegible]

actor *Paris.* Without the employment of horror of the kind introduced into the last-mentioned play Massinger succeeds in [illegible] when there is heard

> *A dreadfull Musicke sounding. Enter Junius Rusticius, and Palphurius Sura, With bloudie swords, they wave them over his head. Cæsar in his sleepe troubled, seemes to pray to the Image, they scornefully take it away . . .*

followed by "*Thunder and lightning.*" The best scenes in the play are those in which Massinger's gift for rhetoric is allowed freest play, those when Paris pleads for his profession; but as a whole the tragedy does not rouse in us the deepest emotions.

The Virgin Martyr is at once a more interesting and a more peculiar play. It abounds in torture and death, but the character of Dorothea is well drawn, and the 'Christian' sentiment removes the tragedy partly from the

regular line of dramatic development. In its setting of Roman decadence, however, in its scenes of torment intermixed with the humours of Hircius and Spungius, in its employment of supernatural forces (Harpax, an evil spirit, follows Theophilus disguised as a secretary), it belongs to the same tradition.

Among the plays of Middleton *The Changeling* (1632; printed 1653; written in collaboration with Rowley) stands out for its villain De Flores, one who has an individuality of his own and is not merely a stock type. The story unfolds itself admirably. In order to marry Alsemero, Beatrice-Joanna commissions De Flores to murder Alonzo Piracquo. The murder is executed, but De Flores demands his reward. Beatrice shrinks from him:

> Why 'tis impossible thou canst be so wicked,

she cries,

> Or shelter such a cunning cruelty,
> To make his death the murderer of my honor.
> Thy language is so bold and vitious,
> I cannot see which way I can forgive it with any modesty.

His reply is cynical and adamant:

> Push, you forget your selfe, a woman dipt in blood, and
> talk of modesty.
> *Bea.* O misery of sin! would I had been bound
> Perpetually unto my living hate
> In that *Piracquo*, then to hear these words.
> Think but upon the distance that Creation
> Set 'twixt thy blood and mine, and keep thee there.
> *Def.* Look but into your conscience, read me there,
> 'Tis a true Book, you'l find me there your equall.

Something of the grandeur of Shakespeare's art enters into this work. Before the indulgence in her fatal error Beatrice feels a premonition of evil. Looking on De Flores, she realizes subconsciously to what he will bring her:

> I never see this fellow, but I think
> Of some harm towards me, danger's in my mind still,
> I scarce leave trembling of an hour after.
> The next good mood I find my father in,
> I'le get him quite discarded.

Peculiarly enough, too, there appear in this play dramatic touches such as Shakespeare knew how to use. In the scene where De Flores murders Alonzo we get, for example, that passionate repetition of a phrase which is so marked in *Macbeth* and in *Antony and Cleopatra:*

> *Alon.* I am upon't.
> *Def.* And so am I.
> *Alon.* *Deflores*, oh *Deflores*, whose malice hast thou put on ?
> *Def.* Doe you question a work of secresie ? I must silence you.
> *Alon* Oh, oh, oh.
> *Def.* I must silence you.

In many ways *The Changeling* is one of the profoundest tragedies outside of the Shakespearian canon. Evil dominates it; but it is evil that breeds evil and consumes itself in its own villainy at the end. In *Women Beware Women* (1612; printed 1657) Middleton again essayed a study in this kind. Beyond the figure of the Cardinal there is hardly an honest character in the whole drama. The Duke of Florence, who falls in love with Bianca, the sensual wife of the poor Leantio, is a mere voluptuary. Bianca herself is absolutely unprincipled. Leantio is selfish enough to keep both his wife and his mother in want, while later in the play he succumbs to the allurements of Livia. A characteristically fine touch in the tragedy is that whereby the Cardinal, in all honesty reproaching the Duke for his association with Bianca, merely brings thoughts of murder into his brother's head. It is not too much to say, viewing these plays, that, dark as Middleton's atmosphere is, he comes as near to Shakespeare in tragic conception as do any of his contemporaries or followers.

Of the horror school proper, however, from which we have deviated slightly in this consideration of Middleton, Ford and Shirley remain the chief and culminating figures. In the former's four tragedies, *The Lovers Melancholy* (1628; printed 1629), *The Broken Heart* (c. 1629; printed 1633), *Loues Sacrifice* (c. 1630; printed 1633), and *Tis Pitty Shees a Whore* (c. 1624; printed 1633), we are thoroughly immersed in the world of romantic decadence. Ford has a feverish imagination; he may be a Shelley, as some critics

have affirmed, but a Shelley without the idealism. His love of dismal incident and nauseous sexual relationships mark him out as a product of an age of degeneracy. His first play is a tragi-comedy, cast in a rich romantic world (Famagosta in Cyprus) and replete with impossible and fantastic adventure. The interest in melancholy broodings and the general atmosphere of the piece relate this play more intimately to his tragedies than to the rest of his work in the tragi-comic strain. The piece is long-drawn out and frankly artificial, while the scenes where Thamasta falls in love with Eroclea disguised as a page make none too pleasant reading. This interest in strained states of mind is revealed by Ford in all his plays. *The Broken Heart* deals likewise with a couple of lovers, Orgilus and Penthea, divided from one another by Ithocles, who has made the latter marry the foolish Bassanes. Penthea determines not to be false to the husband she loathes, but pines away and finally dies. Meanwhile Orgilus plans his revenge, which takes a novel form calculated to appeal to the spectacle-loving audience of his time. Ithocles is caught in a cunningly designed chair, where he is murdered, and Orgilus, confessing his guilt, is sent to death. It is not to be denied that the play contains some powerfully affecting situations, as when Calantha learns of the deaths of her lover, her friend, and her father, but as a whole it is fetid and fantastic. Its unreality is only intensified by the whimsical catalogue of interpretations which Ford saw fit to append to his romantically named characters. Ithocles is the Honour of Lovelin[illegible] is the Angry One, Calantha is the Flower o[illegible]enthea is Complaint

external horror and inner frenzy of spirit are wrought into one impassioned, but half madly impassioned, tragedy. *'Tis Pity* is possibly Ford's greatest, as it is his most d-

rich poetry as is the love of Romeo and Juliet; it is unashamed for all the wealth of rich words used The terrible scene in which the two lovers fall on their knees in a frenzy of amorous passion has something of lunacy in it, and decadent thought is all that can explain the even more terrible scene at the opening of the second act, in which Giovanni, with all the callousness of a degenerate age, informs Annabella that she must marry.

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own diseased imaginations. The wheel in Ford has come full circle. The manly temper of that age which saw the battered ships of the Armada scudding helplessly northward, that age which produced Shakespeare and Spenser, has given way to a period of effeminacy, of degenerate thought, of maddened sensuality. From the dramatic point of view, also, Ford's dramas reveal the weakened spirit of his age. The novelties in the torments introduced upon the stage have no dramatic purpose; they are there merely to arouse feelings of curiosity and thrill in the hearts of a jaded public. So, too, in his treatment of minor characters. The weak-witted Bergetto in *'Tis Pity* meets his death by a stab in the back, and somehow his murder sends an emotion of dissatisfaction through us; the murder is not dramatically justified as, for example, was the murder of Polonius in *Hamlet*. The audience and the dramatists alike had forgotten what was necessary in a masterpiece of theatrical art.

Shirley's plays are less full of lunatic frenzies than Ford's, but they too show the decadence of the time. Six tragedies of his have come down to us, *The Maides Revenge* (1626; printed 1639), *The Traytor* (1631; printed 1635), *Loves*

Crueltie (1631; printed 1640), *The Dukes Mistris* (1636; printed 1638), *The Polititian* (? 1639; printed 1655), and *The Cardinall* (1641; printed 1653 in a set of *Six New Playes*, with separate title-page dated 1652). Only two of these, *The Traitor* and *The Cardinal*, are familiarly known to-day. The first of these two is set in a Court of Italy, the second in a Court of France. *The Traitor* is a story of wild and criminal ambition centring round Lorenzo (the historical Lorenzino de' Medici), who is represented as a villain engaging both the Duke Alexander and Schiarra in his intrigues. The play ends with a wild "heap of tragedies," to use the words of one of the few surviving characters—Schiarra, Amidea, Lorenzo, the Duke, and Petruchio all lying dead upon the stage. The finest scene possibly is that in which the dying Schiarra argues with his sister Amidea and in the end stabs her with his dagger. It cannot be said that this is not a skilfully constructed play; but there remains, as with all of these dramas, a sense of dissatisfaction. It is like "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying—nothing." *The Cardinal* is likewise a story of murder and inhuman cruelty. The title-figure is a villain of inhuman proportions, full of lust and bloodthirstiness. His words are calm and cynical, but in their very calmness unnatural:

> 'Tis in my brain already, and it formes
> Apace, good, excellent revenge, and pleasant!
> She's now within my talons, 'tis too cheap
> A satisfaction for *Columbo's* death,
> Only to kill her by soft charm or force,
> I'l rifle first her darling chastity,
> 'Twil be after time enough to poyson her,
> And she to th' world be thought her own destroyer.
> As I will frame the circumstance, this night
> All may be finished; for the Colonel,
> Her agent in my Nephewes death (whom I
> Disturb'd at Counsell with her) I may reach him
> Hereafter, and be Master of his fate.
> *We starve our Conscience when we thrive in State.*

All the characters seem to have become accustomed to a world of extraordinary crime, and poison is as natural to

them as eating or sleep. Thus we listen to the words of the Duchess:

> And yet
> He says he loves me dearly, and has promis'd
> To make me well again, but I'm afraid,
> One time or other he will give me poyson.

The very ordinariness of the phrasing arouses in our minds a sense of distrust and of disbelief. None of Shirley's other tragedies rise to the height of these, pitifully as these are below the tragedies of Shakespeare. Stock types are all that appear in the melodramatic Portuguese story of *The Maid's Revenge*. In *Love's Cruelty*, on the other hand, we reach something which is more than a mere play of lubricity. The tragic *dénouement* follows logically on the fatal weakness of Clarissa, and the characters, while not being presented with any highly individualized traits, are sufficiently interesting to make this tragedy of woman's curiosity almost unique among the later dramas. This play shows that it is not precisely the dealing with sin that makes the tragedies of Ford and the others weak and even disgusting, but the real lack of a true conception of tragic passion and purpose.

It is perhaps unnecessary to detail many of the other tragedies which follow in this line of development, but one or two of the later plays may be briefly indicated for their bearing upon the dramatic tendencies of the time. *The Fatal Contract* (date uncertain; printed 1653) of William Heminge, the son, it is said, of Shakespeare's fellow-actor, has an interest in its choice of theme and in its treatment of villainy, but hardly rises to any great levels of art. Sir John Suckling's *Aglaura* (printed 1638) and *Brennoralt* (printed 1646) must occupy a few lines of comment because of their popularity, partly, it is to be suspected, derived from the esteem in which their author was held as a literary man. The first is a rather poor romantic production in which a universal massacre befalls the characters in the fifth act. True to the spirit of the age, however, Suckling wrote an alternative conclusion to his play, in which, by the use of some ingenuity and at the cost of a good deal of

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verisimilitude, these same characters are preserved aliv
and happy. An equally mythical Poland is the settin
for the largely political tragi-comedy of *Brennoralt*, in which
Suckling shows a considerably greater power over play
construction and management of character.

Horror of a primitive kind appears in *A Tragedy called All's Lost by Lust* (c. 1616–9; printed 1633) by William Rowley. The theme is improbable, but some of the scenes are powerfully managed. The alliance of the father of the deflowered Jacinta with Mully Mumen is well wrought out, although the inhuman treachery of the Moor leaves us, in Jonson's words, "somewhat costive of belief." Nor do the horrors end with the Moor-Jacinta plot. The low-born Margaretta murders Lazaretto by mistake and finally commits suicide, while her bigamous husband Antonio is fatally wounded. Finely as some of the scenes are planned, the lack of a central purpose in the play destroys its general effect.

For the sake of the author, Sir William D'Avenant's two plays, *The Tragedy of Albovine, King of the Lombards* (written 1626; printed 1629) and *The Cruell Brother* (1627; printed 1630), may conclude this survey. Both are gloomy and murderous dramas, where lust, ambition, rapine, and violence fill out gruesome stories. In these tragedies D'Avenant shows himself the follower of Fletcher, Ford, Webster, and Shirley, steeping himself in the atmosphere of lust and criminality before he rose with others to the eights of artificial love and honour.

Several other plays there are, such as the anonymous
econd Maidens Tragedy (1611; extant in manuscript and
inted in the Malone Society publications) and *Nero*
623; printed 1624), which display features calling for
ention; but these features are all confined to individual
nes or characters. Even the best of these plays are
red by serious blemishes, and nearly all show the same
es of thrilling or revolting situations, of unnatural
axes and catastrophes, and of stock characterization.
the romantic drama has run hopelessly to seed.

CHAPTER VII

THE DOMESTIC DRAMA

REACTION to the mood of artificial tragi-comedy and of equally artificial *blood-and-thunder* tragedy may be found in the school of realistic dramatists who strove to express their ideals now in the realm of the comic theatre, now in more serious dramas. It has been already pointed out, in the brief notice of *Arden of Feversham*, that realism of this sort was an inevitable outcome of the romantic theatre. Just as the Romantic Revival of the early nineteenth century led toward the excessive simplicity and naturalism of Wordsworth, so in the early seventeenth century the bizarre and florid features of the Fordian and Shirleian tragedies exist alongside of the crude simplicity of the realistic plays; and both are to be regarded as normal developments of the one, only half-conscious, theory of artistic expression. Both are opposed to the chill, the calm, and the unnatural dignity of the neo-classic stage.

In the field of domestic drama the early seventeenth century is not great; it produced no single masterpiece which might serve as a model for future writers. At the same time, in this period were written a number of plays which, while largely experimental and consequently tentative, formed a basis for the development of bourgeois drama in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. *Arden of Feversham*, in spite of the fact that it lacks a broader spirit and universal appeal, is a well-written drama, and the work of Dekker and of Heywood in this particular genre is by no means to be neglected. Before glancing at one or two of the typical productions in this style it may be noted that here we possess the one unquestioned contribution of the English stage to the dramatic form in general. Above all, Shakespeare inaugurated nothing entirely new in the

verisimilitude, these same characters are preserved alive and happy. An equally mythical Poland is the setting for the largely political tragi-comedy of *Brennoralt*, in which Suckling shows a considerably greater power over play construction and management of character.

Horror of a primitive kind appears in *A Tragedy called All's Lost by Lust* (*c.* 1616–9; printed 1633) by William Rowley. The theme is improbable, but some of the scenes are powerfully managed. The alliance of the father of the deflowered Jacinta with Mully Mumen is well wrought out, although the inhuman treachery of the Moor leaves us, in Jonson's words, "somewhat costive of belief." Nor do the horrors end with the Moor-Jacinta plot. The low-born Margaretta murders Lazaretto by mistake and finally commits suicide, while her bigamous husband Antonio is fatally wounded. Finely as some of the scenes are planned, the lack of a central purpose in the play destroys its general effect.

For the sake of the author, Sir William D'Avenant's two plays, *The Tragedy of Albovine, King of the Lombards* (written 1626; printed 1629) and *The Cruell Brother* (1627; printed 1630), may conclude this survey. Both are gloomy and murderous dramas, where lust, ambition, rapine, nd violence fill out gruesome stories. In these tragedies 'Avenant shows himself the follower of Fletcher, Ford, ebster, and Shirley, steeping himself in the atmosphere lust and criminality before he rose with others to the ights of artificial love and honour.

Several other plays there are, such as the anonymous *ond Maidens Tragedy* (1611; extant in manuscript and nted in the Malone Society publications) and *Nero* 3; printed 1624), which display features calling for ntion; but these features are all confined to individual es or characters. Even the best of these plays are ed by serious blemishes, and nearly all show the same of thrilling or revolting situations, of unnatural xes and catastrophes, and of stock characterization. he romantic drama has run hopelessly to seed.

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world of the theatre; the Spanish drama was as romantic as his. In the domestic tragedy, on the other hand, there is something distinctively novel. A few domestic dramas had been produced on the Continent, but it was in England alone that there appeared a truly genuine tragedy based on contemporary situations. The importance of this fact becomes evident when we consider that the *bourgeois* drama has become in our own times the chief means of expression for tragic playwrights.

The first appearance of a truly great play of the crudely realistic type after the production of *Arden of Feversham* was *A Yorkshire Tragedy. Not so New as Lamentable and true* (c. 1606; printed 1608). This work, which contains only ten scenes, was part of a larger whole entitled *All's One, or, Foure Plaies in One*, a performance no doubt similar to Beaumont and Fletcher's *Four Plays, or Moral Representations in One* (date unknown; printed 1647), consisting of several short pieces bound together by some slight common tie. This type of performance, decidedly anti-classical in tendency, was popular in the last years of the sixteenth century, as we know from Henslowe's *Diary*, and preserved its popularity in D'Avenant's *The Play-House to be Lett* (c. 1663; printed 1673) and in Jacob's *The Nest of Plays* (1738). The type of performance may still be found, although without the common tie, in Grand Guignol *répertoires*. *A Yorkshire Tragedy* is, on the title-page, attributed to Shakespeare, but most critics are agreed in finding nothing of his hand in the drama. It is peculiar, however, that both of these early domestic tragedies should have been given to him, one by a contemporary printer and the other by a critic of the eighteenth century. The husband of this later play is a powerfully delineated type, and the crude realism of the work is given something of a monumental tone by his villainy, repentance, and final series of ghastly murders. There is an advance here on the characterization of *Arden of Feversham*, and there seems, in spite of the shortness of the piece, an attempt at securing some broader and loftier appeal.

Between the appearance of *Arden of Feversham* and this

drama not a few works of a similar type, but of a lesser value, had appeared. Records of what were evidently *bourgeois* tragedies now lost are to be found in Henslowe's *Diary*; and besides these bare records there have been preserved an anonymous drama styled *A warning for Faire Women* (printed 1599), Robert Yarington's [1] *Two Lamentable Tragedies* (printed 1601), as well as Thomas Dekker's *The Honest Whore* (Part I 1604, Part II *c.* 1605; printed 1604 and 1630) and Thomas Heywood's *A Woman Kilde with Kindnesse* (1603; printed 1607). *The Miseries of Inforst Mariage* (1607), by George Wilkins, is further a tragi-comic version of the theme of *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, and Heywood's *The English Traveller* (*c.* 1627; printed 1633) a later example of the serious domestic play.

The first and second of these dramas give really nothing new to the type. *A Warning for Fair Women* narrates the murder "of Master George Sanders of London Marchant, nigh Shooters hill"; the *Two Lamentable Tragedies* adds to a 'Babes in the Wood' theme the story of Merry's murder of Beech. Both are somewhat flamboyant productions and full of weak dialogue and impossible dramatic devices. With Dekker and Heywood, on the other hand, we reach a new form of drama, infinitely less crude than all the preceding efforts and containing not merely the narration of "horrid murthers," but genuine attempts at the expression of social problems and the portrayal of real characters.

The Honest Whore, in the first part of which Middleton had a share, may be taken as an introduction to this type, although already Heywood had brought out *A Woman Killed with Kindness.* It will be noted that this is not a tragedy in the ordinary sense of the term, nor is it a tragi-comedy of the Beaumont and Fletcher sort; it lies in a sphere outside of these, the sphere of the problem play and of the *drame.* Thought and feeling are cast into the conception of this drama, and in Orlando Friscobaldo, as

[1] Such is the name of the author on the title-page. This may be a mistake; the play has been given by Dr W. W. Greg to Day, Haughton, and Chettle

Hazlitt saw, we have one of the most living characters in the whole of seventeenth-century dramatic productivity. The problems that arise out of marital infidelity are here presented with a truth and profundity to which but few writers of the time could attain, and the scene at the opening of Act III in Part II, beyond the wit and gaiety of Infelice, has a depth of thought in it hard to equal. Infelice has pretended herself unfaithful to her husband Hippolito, in order thereby to sting him more for his own incontinency.

Inf. I beg but this;
Set not my shame out to the worlds broad eye,
Yet let thy vengeance (like my fault) soare hye,
So it be in darkned clowdes.
Hip. Darkned! my hornes
Cannot be darkned, nor shall my reuenge.
A Harlot to my slaue? the act is base,
Common, but foule, so shall [not] thy disgrace.
Could not I feed your appetite? oh women
You were created Angels, pure and faire;
But since the first fell, tempting Deuils you are;
You should be mens blisse, but you proue their rods.
Were there no women, men might liue like gods.
You ha beene too much downe already, rise,
Get from my sight, and henceforth shun my bed,
Ile with no Strumpets breath be poysoned.
As for your Irish *Lubrican*,[1] that spirit
Whom by prepostrous charmes thy lust hath raised
In a wrong Circle, him Ile damne more blacke
Then any Tyrants soule.
Inf. Hipollito?
Hip. Tell me, didst thou baite Hawkes to draw him to thee, or did he bewitch thee?
Inf. The slaue did woo me.
Hip. Two wooes in that Skreech-owles language? Oh who would trust your corcke-heeld sex? I thinke to sate your lust, you would loue a Horse, a Beare, a croaking Toade, so your hot itching veines might haue their bound, then the wild Irish Dart was throwne. Come, how? the manner of this fight.
Inf. 'Twas thus, he gaue me his battery first, Oh I
Mistake, Beleeue me, all this in beaten gold:
Yet I held out, but at length this was charm'd.

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[1] 'Lubrican' is a variant of 'leprechaun,' an English form of an Irish word meaning a sprite or goblin.

> What? change your Diamond wench, the act is base,
> Common, but foule, so shall not your disgrace:
> Could not I feed your appetite? Oh Men,
> You were created Angels, pure and faire,
> But since the first fell, worse then Deuils you are.
> You should our shields be, but you proue our rods,
> Were there no Men, women might liue like gods.
> Guilty my Lord?
> *Hip.* Yes, guilty, my good Lady.

There is here something far beyond the callous and thoughtless treatment of intrigue and unfaithfulness visible in the average comedies of the time and in the tragi-comedies of the following decades.

In *A Woman Killed with Kindness* the stressing of the problem becomes even more marked. The story is essentially a simple one. Frankford and his wife are happily married, until the former's friend Wendoll, not sinful by nature but weak, seduces the latter. The husband, in his trust, suspects nothing, until his old servant breaks the truth to him. He pretends to leave for a journey, but returns in the dark of night to find his wife in his friend's embraces. Instead of murdering them both, as the convention of ordinary tragedy would have demanded, he pardons his still beloved Anne and sends her to live in seclusion at a lonely manor. There she pines, and, dying, sends for him. In his presence her repentant spirit passes away. As Heywood realized, there was little here of the ordinary dramatic fare; and as warning he sent the prologue out before the audience:

> I come but like a Harbenger being sent,
> To tell you what these preparations meane:
> Looke for no glorious state, our muse is bent
> Vpon a barrein subiect: a bare sceane
> We could afford this twig a Timber tree,
> *Whose strength might boldly on your fauours build,*
> Our Russet, Tissew · Drone, a Hony-Bee,
> Our barrein plot, a large and spacious fielde,
> Our course fare, banquets: our thin Water, Wine:
> Our Brooke, a Sea: our Bats eyes, Eagles sight:
> Our Poets dull and earthy muse, Diuine.

In spite of the 'barrenness' of the theme, however,

Heywood's play was instantly acclaimed, running to three editions by 1617. Nor is this surprising. The very story tells of the higher feeling of the author, and the treatment is worthy of the plot. The delicate touches by which the author depicts the wife's fall, the symbolic game of cards before the final discovery, the tremendous passion of the husband, all tell of a dramatic genius of no common sort. It is in the expression of this passion that Heywood rises to the heights of poetry. Nicholas the servant is about to wake the two guilty lovers; Frankford hinders him; then his thoughts pour forth in a torrent of agony:

Oh God, oh God, that it were possible
To vndo things done, to cal back yesterday;
That time could turne vp his swift sandy glasse,
To vntel the daies, and to redeeme these howres:
Or that the sunne
Could rising from the West, draw his coach backward
Take from the account of time so many minutes
Til he had al these seasons cald againe,
Those minutes and those actions done in them,
Euen from her first offence, that I might take her
As spotles as an Angel in my armes,
But oh: I talke of things impossible,
And cast beyond the moone, God giue me patience,
For I wil in to wake them.

I know of nothing more tremendous in the whole range of Elizabethan drama; there is here something of Shakespeare's greatness.

Not only the characterization of this play deserves attention, but the atmosphere given to the plot as a whole. There is nothing of fate in the defection of Mistress Frankford, but some supernatural element is constantly suggested. Frankford opens the day which is to embitter his whole life with a soliloquy on his happiness and security; Mistress Frankford herself falls into compliance with Wendoll as if some force were driving her on. She realizes fully the fine nature of her husband; she sees the heinousness of the sin she contemplates; and with an "Oh Master Wendoll Oh" she sinks into acquiescence. There is nothing here of mere licentious intrigue.

The English Traveller presents the same features as does this early play, but these features are confused and marred by a sub-plot of Plautan comic type. The main story of this play likewise introduces a problem. Geraldine, a fine young English gentleman, whose culture has been increased by foreign travel, returns home. There he falls in love with the wife of an elderly friend of his, but, disdaining to wrong this friend, he pledges with her eternal chastity. At this point the villain, in the shape of a treacherous and licentious young gallant, enters into the development of the story. He succeeds in seducing the wife, and hints to various characters that Geraldine is guilty. In the end his evil practices are laid bare, and the wife dies of shame and repentance. One thing is noticeable in both these plays. Most of the early seventeenth-century dramatists were obsessed by the consciousness of sin; they felt a kind of unholy horror in the contemplation of it, yet they were led deeper and deeper into the slough of despond. Considered from the purely æsthetic point of view, many of the most striking and most beautiful passages in the works of these dramatists are the passages which deal with the most obnoxious situations. Heywood stands apart. He is not interested in the psychology of sin as such; he is interested in the reflection of that sin in the minds of others. Thus Frankford is more carefully drawn than Mrs Frankford; Geraldine is a more complete portrait than is the erring wife. It is this which places Heywood so high among the playwrights of his time; here at least one man preserved his sanity, his feelings of truth and honesty and goodness, unimpaired in the midst of what was a general corruption of manners and taste. The revelry of the Stuart Court passed him by, and he found solace and strength in the inherent nobility of the middle classes of his time.

The *bourgeois* drama, in spite of these early efforts, was doomed to give way to the more spectacular forces of the romantic tragi-comedy and of the horror tragedy; heroic sentiments and the results of brilliant but diseased imaginations were to take the minds of men far from the contemplation of ordinary sorrows and ordinary joys.

Yet the effort had been made, and was to bear fruit in the future. The author of *Arden of Feversham*, Dekker, and Heywood were to become the ancestors of the authors of *The Orphan* and of *The London Merchant*, and through these later writers the tradition was to be handed on to Lessing at the close of the eighteenth century and to Ibsen at the close of the nineteenth. Ibsen, in his turn, became the master of many of the most talented dramatists of our own age.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CHRONICLE HISTORY

ALREADY we have noted alongside of the development of what may be styled regular tragedy and comedy the appearance of the history play, first in a modified kind of morality form as in Bale's *Kynge Johan* and later in the various dramas, mostly anonymous, produced at the time when the University Wits were establishing the romantic drama in England. The University Wits themselves indulged in the form, Peele giving us his *Edward I*, Marlowe his *Edward II*, and Greene his more fantastic *James IV*. It was but natural that Shakespeare, following these University Wits, should make some attempts in this form. The chronicle history was popular in the nineties of the sixteenth century, partly because it allowed of bustle and action, partly because it could mingle together thoughts serious and merry, tragic and comic, and partly because there had come over England in those years a wave of patriotic sentiment. The Armada had just been scattered; Elizabeth had just made herself the unquestioned head of a unified nation and of an established Church. Men were thus eager to trace in dramatic form the development of England in the record of its kings, and to fight over again the many battles, glorious and inglorious, with their hereditary enemies across the Channel. Shakespeare, an actor himself and watching keenly the theatrical fashions of his time, seems, characteristically, to have determined to present as complete a set of historical dramas as lay in his power.

Tentatively enough he started with the three parts of *Henry the Sixt* (1592; printed 1623), in which he apparently [illegible]

[illegible] believed them to be his, but more progressive critics of recent times have decided that but little

remains in them of the master's writing. It is hard to dogmatize over a matter such as this, but, recognizing that these are the earliest of Shakespeare's efforts in the dramatic world, we may perhaps believe that much of the distinctly inferior dialogue is possibly his, penned at a time before he found his own true method of expression.

The Tragedy of King Richard the third (? 1593; printed 1597) evidently came next, and here Shakespeare, while following an earlier tragedy on the same theme and altering that earlier work in the spirit of Marlowe, has secured something of an individual note. It is not that here Shakespeare has secured perfect characterization or perfect form, but Richard is a firmly drawn character. The passion that is in him, the gleaming eyes of the man staring hungrily at his goal, show an advance on anything which had gone before. We may say that the Lady Anne scene is impossible; we may compare unfavourably the scene wherein the messenger announces the approach of Richard's foes with the similar scene in *Macbeth*; we may condemn the introduction of the melodramatic ghosts, but at the same time we realize that in this play we have an ordered whole which retains its beauty in spite of the many obvious blemishes in the development of the plot.

In *The Tragedie of King Richard the second* (1595–6; printed 1597) Shakespeare has achieved more individuality of utterance, although many of the minor characters are lacking in personality, and the sharply contrasted Richard and Bolingbroke remind us of the similar contrast in *Edward II*. This tragedy is more lyrical than the other, not only in the general dialogue, but in the characterization of Richard, who is nothing if not a dreamer and a poet. All the King's soliloquies are couched in a rich, ecstatic language. He is 'conceited' as Romeo is, and even when he lies imprisoned in Pomfret Castle he indulges in his habitual lyricism.

Musicke do I heare ?
Ha, ha ? keepe time : How sowre sweet Musicke is,
When Time is broke, and no Proportion kept ?
So is it in the Musicke of mens liues :
And heere haue I the daintinesse of care,

To heare time broke in a disorder'd string:
But for the Concord of my State and Time,
Had not an eare to heare my true Time broke.
I wasted Time, and now doth Time waste me:
For now hath Time made me his numbring clocke;
My Thoughts, are minutes; and with Sighes they iarre,
Their watches on vnto mine eyes, the outward Watch,
Whereto my finger, like a Dialls point,
Is pointing still, in cleansing them from teares.
Now sir, the sound that tels what houre it is,
Are clamorous groanes, that strike vpon my heart,
Which is the bell: so Sighes, and Teares, and Grones,
Shew Minutes, Houres, and Times: but my Time
Runs poasting on, in *Bullingbrookes* proud ioy,
While I stand fooling heere, his iacke o' th' Clocke.
This Musicke mads me, let it sound no more,
For though it haue holpe madmen to their wits,
In me it seemes, it will make wise-men mad:
Yet blessing on his heart that giues it me;
For 'tis a signe of loue, and loue to *Richard*,
Is a strange Brooch, in this all-hating world

Here Shakespeare is writing history in the terms of *Romeo and Juliet.*

It is highly probable that, a year before the appearance of *Richard II*, *The Life and Death of King John* (printed 1623) was produced. This drama, based on *The Troublesome Reign of King John*, is nearer in spirit to the first than to the second of the Richard plays. Shakespeare has kept close to his original, although his omissions as well as his additions betoken care and thought. The very opening shows us this, where Shakespeare, omitting about thirty lines of the original, has been able to plunge *in medias res*. Two things are particularly noticeable in this drama in general. The first is the fact that, in structure, it is least like a chronicle history. Several salient facts in John's career have been selected, so that the form is more co-ordinate and unified than it is in either *Richard III* or *Richard II*. The second point of interest is the patriotism of the piece. Nowhere has Shakespeare deviated so much from history in order to praise the English and condemn the French. As in *Richard II*, there is little humour, save that of a peculiarly sarcastic nature put into the mouth of

the Bastard Faulconbridge, but there appears here in Constance a woman character more finely drawn than any other of Shakespeare's historical women types.

So far Shakespeare's endeavours in the realm of historical drama had not shown anything of peerless excellence, but about 1596 or 1597 appeared the true masterpiece of *The History of Henrie the Fourth* (printed 1598), followed by *The Second part of Henrie the fourth* (1597–8; printed 1600). Instead of gloomy tragedy or lyrical passion there is transfused into this play a genuinely realistic and humorous tone. Out of the sketch of the character of a certain Sir John Oldcastle Shakespeare developed the now immortal figure of Falstaff, one who, as we have seen, belongs to the realm of the romantic comedy. That Shakespeare did not feel quite at ease in the company of this witty old rascal is shown probably by the 'rejection of Falstaff' at the close of the second part of the play, and by the record of his death in *The Chronicle History of Henry the fift* (1599; printed 1600), the last of this series of history plays. Concerning *Henry V* opinions have been various. Regarded impartially, the drama does seem to mark a falling off from the others. Nowhere save in the suspect *Merry Wives of Windsor* has Shakespeare presented us with such palpable 'humours,' not only in Nym, Bardolph, and Pistol, but in Fluellen, Gower, Macmorris, and Jamy. It is observable how the older characters taken over from *Henry IV* have changed. Doll Tearsheet is dead, and the narration of Falstaff's end gives occasion for one of the most touching speeches in the play; Nym and Bardolph are hanged, and Pistol, waxing old, must turn to theft. The old company has passed away for ever. Nor is Henry here by any means the Hal of merry memory in *Henry IV*. The whole atmosphere has altered; and Mr J. M. Robertson has many points of evidence in his favour when he relieves Shakespeare from the burden of much of the language and plot-development.

Immediately after the production of *Henry V* Shakespeare turned to write his greater tragedies; he was not to return to the history play until he collaborated with

Fletcher in penning *The Famous History of the Life of King Henry the Eight* (*c.* 1613; printed 1623), an infinitely slighter and less enthralling drama than any which had preceded it. The figure of Wolsey certainly rises to lofty heights, but there is a weakness in the drama as a whole. The age of the chronicle history had passed away.

Few are the attempts in this style in the seventeenth century. Samuel Rowley has one to his credit in *When you see me, You know me* (*c.* 1603; printed 1605), interesting because it deals with the subject-matter of the last-mentioned drama. Here also Wolsey's character is that best developed, but the clownage in many of the scenes ruins entirely the unity of effect. John Ford has another in *The Chronicle Historie of Perkin Warbeck* (printed 1634), a well-written drama with an excellently delineated title-*rôle*. Except for these, however, we may say that the chronicle history was dead by the end of the sixteenth century.

Several reasons, perhaps, may be brought forward to account for this sudden disappearance of the type. The first, and most obvious, is the fact that the chief themes had been worn out. So recent a reign as that of Elizabeth could not be dealt with, and before the time of King John there was probably hardly sufficient historical material for the dramatists to build their structures aright. But this could hardly be all. We must take into account, too, the weakening spirit of patriotism at the time. Men were less adventurous and England-loving than they had been at the close of the sixteenth century, and were accordingly less interested in the affairs of their country in the past. It is noticeable that Chapman, in turning to historical drama, took his themes not from English, but from French chronicles. The romantic spirit, also, was leading men away from realism and the depiction of fact. In this connexion the early Britain dramas are instructive. Possibly they owed some of their popularity to patriotic sentiment, but it was a patriotic sentiment far different from that which had inspired the hearts of Drake and of Raleigh. Artificiality and hazy, fanciful sentiment had taken the place of reality and forceful thought.

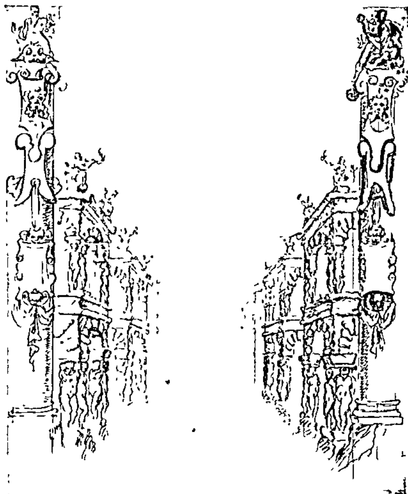
CHAPTER IX

THE MASQUE

NO account of English drama could be complete without a note, at least, devoted to the development of the masque, although the masque is in no wise connected with the popular stage, and in some ways is distinctly undramatic. At the same time there are many masques essentially dramatic in form, and masques of a sort were introduced into regular plays, as, for example, in *The Tempest*.

The masque arose out of courtly revelry. The disguisings of early days when the king and his nobles accompanied by the queen and her ladies strove to make the nights bright with rich and fanciful pageantry easily developed into the spoken masque. In origin the disguising and masquerading of earlier days is thoroughly English; but this native strain met in the beginning and middle of the sixteenth century with a Continental element taken *via* France from Italy, and so developed toward the close of the century the typically Elizabethan and Stuart masque. Herein fanciful poetry usually of a eulogistic kind met with rich costuming and the spirit of adventurous intrigue. Masquers came from their places, and, mingling with the spectators, danced with them. For a moment care was thrown to the winds, and under the flaring torchlights or milder glimmer of the candles knights and ladies laughed away the time or danced over the rush-strewn floors.

The masque proper, at least as we know it to-day, is rather a Stuart than an Elizabethan development. Sir Philip Sidney, certainly, has left us his *May Lady* (1578; printed in *The Countesse of Pembrokes Arcadia*, 1598), but the full development of the type does not come till we reach the time of Ben Jonson in the early seventeenth century. After one or two "entertainments" Jonson



DESIGN BY INIGO JONES FOR "NEPTUNE'S TRIUMPH" 210

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penned his *Masque of Blacknesse* (1605; printed 1608) which was so successful for its poetry and for the artisti co-operation of the author and Inigo Jones, the artificer that Jonson was called on again and again to provide simila pieces for the delectation of the Court. Other writers to were bidden to prepare these royal spectacles—Thoma Campion, Samuel Daniel, Francis Beaumont, George Chap man, Thomas Carew, Sir William D'Avenant, and Jame Shirley. Others were commissioned to write pieces fo nobles of the realm; Milton himself penned *Comus* fo the Bridgewater family.

It is impossible here to spare space for a lengthy dis cussion of these works, but one or two salient points ma be noted in general. The first concerns the structure o the masque itself. Up to Jonson's time the masque wa a fanciful entity, but in *The Masque of Queenes* (1609) h introduced a feature which was already apparent in a

h century—a dance c

e known technically a

the antimasque. This antimasque contributed somethin of a satyric note to the work, and the novelty inherent i the contrast between the gorgeous splendour of the masqu proper and the contorted or 'antick' forms of the anti masque assured the latter full popularity.

The second point concerns a question of dramatic history After the early masques of James I's reign and of the firs years of that of Charles I the masque fashion, apparentl for financial reasons, fell into disfavour. Possibly the late specimens of this kind would never have been produce had it not been for the appearance in 1632 of Prynne famous diatribe against Court and stage entitled *Histrio mastix*. As with one accord the Cavaliers, reacting t this Puritan attack, took to themselves an added bravado. Some of the most gorgeous masques of the whole seven- teenth century appea

this work—Carew's no

printed 1634), Shirley

Riches (printed 1633)

Peace (1633-4), and S

Spolia (1639–40).[1] It is observable that Milton's *Arcades* (printed 1645) and *Comus* (1634; printed 1637) fall within this period of Cavalier enthusiasm against the Puritan opposition to staging and riotous revelry.

The staging of these masques also requires our attention. In the endeavours of Inigo Jones, assisted by Jonson and the Court favour, we find the first definite approach toward modern systems of scenic display. The masques certainly were Court functions, wholly dissociated from the popular stages, but that cannot take away from the importance of Inigo Jones' innovations. With the desire for richness the elaboration of scenery and 'machines' proved inevitable. From Italy Jones no doubt brought back with him many ideas for the development of scenic art in England and put these into practice in the palace shows. At first working with a single set scene, he elaborated a kind of shifting setting, attained first by a triangular frame which could be turned to show separate and distinct pieces of scenery, later by the employment of flats and side-wings running in grooves. The importance of these innovations has already been commented upon. The influence of Jones' endeavours is to be seen in the production of *Aglaura* previously mentioned; his own pupil and assistant, John Webb, aided D'Avenant in the arrangements for *The Siege of Rhodes* in 1656; and D'Avenant was the first to establish regular scenery on the public stage of England, as he was one of the last to be associated as poet in the production of a Court masque. The age was moving forward, and the establishment of the 'picture-frame' stage would have been effected even although no Commonwealth *régime* had apparently broken the line of theatrical tradition.

. . . . . .

A backward glance at the history of drama from 1600 to 1642 shows a general movement toward the elaboration of spectacular elements, revealed in their own way in this

[1] Already D'Avenant had written and produced *The Temple of Love* (1634), *The Triumphs of the Prince d'Amour* (1635–6), and *Britannia Triumphans* (1637).

masque scenery. The strong idealistic drama of the early years was being slowly crushed out of existence both by crude realism and by artificial romance. On the one hand the followers of Jonson were bringing vulgarity and crudity into the theatre. On the other the followers of Beaumont and Fletcher were introducing weaker or more corrupt emotions, artificiality of plot and of character-drawing, thrillingly startling effects, and spectacular novelties. Against the general tendency of the times a few men are seen striving—Dekker in his fresh, naturalistic comedy, Heywood in his *bourgeois* drama, Massinger more feebly in his serious but vitiated rhetorical tragedies.

The contrast between the two extremes of ultra-realism and of ultra-artificiality prepares the way for the two main types of Restoration drama. Men have lost the true feeling of moral right, of high thinking, of sincerity; they appreciate wit far more than all of these; and accordingly we are not far from the period when Etherege was to found the comedy of manners. With the loss of honourable and moral sentiments true nobility of character has gone, and elaborate disquisitions on courage and virtue take their place. Here we find the basis for the development of the heroic drama, where courage, virtue, honesty, honour, are all exaggerated to such a height that they cease to bear any resemblance to these qualities as exemplified in actual life

At the same time, while we note this general decay and decadence in the age, we cannot fail to discern the true greatness in drama continued from Elizabethan times Ford, Webster, and Shirley are all true poets; Fletcher is a genius in his own style of drama, Massinger's [illegible] temper, D'Avenant's romantic aspirations, [illegible] gloomy thoughts, Tourneur's dark imagination [illegible] in them the breath of inspiration, and Jonson [illegible] a burly colossus over his age. The richness [illegible] is unquestioned, even when we recognize that [illegible] like to that of a flower, passing [illegible] becoming florid and indelicate, [illegible] into aridity. If the metaphor be [illegible] seems still further truth to be [illegible]

this flower which in maturity was Shakespeare, scattered not only in England, but all over the world, gave birth to a new plant as sturdy and almost as beautiful as the old. If we cast our gaze over Europe in the eighteenth century we can see that everywhere it was the Elizabethan drama which inspired the rising theatres of the Continent, and drove back the chilling theories of neo-classical France, until, in time, France itself gave way and in Victor Hugo produced a romantic and bizarre genius akin to Shakespeare himself. Nor is Shakespeare alone. Massinger has fired the enthusiasm of not only one Continental writer; Heywood, as we have seen, stands at the head of a vast and far-reaching dramatic tradition never more keenly alive than it is to-day; Ford has captured the fancy of one of the best known of modern playwrights, the mystic and symbolic Maurice Maeterlinck. This is the period, after all, which created our greatest national treasure, a treasure which has become the heritage of all mankind.

PART III

RESTORATION DRAMA

CHAPTER I

THE SOCIAL AND THEATRICAL ENVIRONMENT
DRAMA DURING THE COMMONWEALTH

Drama under the Puritans

THE theatres were officially closed by Commonwealth ordinance in 1642; theoretically there was no further acting in England until 1660 saw the restoration of Charles II. Appearances, however, are often deceptive, and we cannot assume either that the firmly established love of theatrical shows was completely suppressed during these eighteen years of dramatic silence, or that there was during this period any marked break in the theatrical tradition. Recent research is tending to prove that the old theory which insisted that the Restoration drama had very little to do with the Elizabethan was false, because it was based on an insufficient sifting of the evidence

There is no question but that the Puritan authorities [illegible] all sorts of amusement, [illegible] re is equally no question [illegible] rs frequently evaded the [illegible] some of the players of Caroline days, and at theatres, booths, inns, halls, by bands of actors who put before the spectators 'drolls' or farces. It would appear that the latter were fairly common, and may not have come so much under the disapprobation of the Puritans as the former. These drolls were usually short one-act farces taken from well-known plays. Thus the more rudely

comic portions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* were extracted from the play as a whole, and the result performed under the title of *Bottom the Weaver*. Of these drolls two collections are extant, one entitled *The Wits*, published in 1662, and the other *The Stroler's Pacquet Open'd*, issued in 1742. This droll tradition is an important one, for it ran its course by the side of the regular theatre tradition right on to the close of the eighteenth century. Nor does an account of the acting of drolls exhaust the theatrical activities of the Commonwealth period. Regular plays too were frequently to be seen on the boards. Whenever the actors could gather an audience together in one of the several half-dismantled playhouses they would, no doubt in most unseemly haste, hurry through some Beaumont and Fletcher or Shakespeare drama. Sometimes these performances were interrupted by the rude entrance of the Puritan soldiers, and then the affair was put into the primitive newspapers of the time; more often than not the players must have got off unscathed, and all record of the performance must irretrievably have been lost. There are many extant accounts of acting during these years, and those accounts, we must presume, are but roughly indicative of a fairly constant series of irregular performances both in London and in the provinces. The continuity of tradition was thus in two distinct ways being preserved.

Nor were these the only means by which the earlier Caroline theatre was connected with the later. Some of the actors at least formed themselves into a company and set off for Germany under the leadership of one George Jolly, who was later to associate himself with William Beeston, formerly master or governor of the King's company of child players, at Salisbury Court. His *répertoire* must have been composed of well-known Elizabethan, Jacobean, and Caroline plays, and the acting traditions of earlier days must have been carried on by his activities over the eighteen years of theatre suppression. William Beeston himself forms another link. This man, whom Dryden called the Chronicle of the Stage, was the son of Christopher



"RED BULL" STAGE

Beeston, who had known Shakespeare and Spenser in the opening years of the seventeenth century. It is likely that William Beeston, owner in 1660 of the Salisbury Court playhouse and associated with D'Avenant in the ... theatrical undertakings, played the part of a *maestro*

... *The Siege of Rhodes* ...

...ears of the Common-
...e oasis of licensed
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... severest Puritanical convictions looked back to the theatrical glories of days gone by, and kept alive in their hearts the love of acting. The various links we have already glanced at serve to show the binding together of the theatre tradition as far as actual performances and methods of acting are concerned; but the tradition of the written play was also preserved in several distinct ways. *Many of the players* at least found their regular sources of income taken away from them, and they were forced to dispose of that which in earlier days they had jealously guarded. It is a peculiar fact that in the early seventeenth century the players seem to have believed that a drama unprinted was *more likely* to be ... the theatre than a drama published. Accordingly

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evidently looked upon his plays as his *own* property and had his *Works* printed in 1616; but normally the various dramas were regarded as the possessions of those companies by whom they had first been produced. During th

Commonwealth period many of these plays were released by the actors. It is probably to the Commonwealth restrictions that we owe many of the best works of Beaumont and Fletcher, issued by the actors in 1647, and the eighteen years of suppression are plentifully studded with the publication of various independent plays. That this publication would have been impossible without a corresponding reading public is a necessary assumption; there were many in England who, remembering pleasant days spent in the theatres, turned from the stage to the study and perused there their favourite tragedies and comedies of Shakespeare, of Beaumont and Fletcher, or of Shirley.

(ii) The Restoration Theatre

In 1660 Charles II returned to his throne amid the rejoicings of a nation wearied of the excessive restrictions of the Commonwealth era, and his band of devoted Cavaliers, who had shared his exile with him, joined with the many people in England eager for a return of earlier Caroline traditions. No sooner was Charles on his throne than bodies of actors were formed into companies. George Jolly hurried back from Germany; William Beeston hastily opened up the Salisbury Court theatre; Killigrew gathered together the remnants of the old King's men; D'Avenant collected a body of young actors, untrained, but eager for histrionic glory. The King, however, was anxious to keep the affairs of the theatre in his own hands, and within a few months of his accession he had issued orders and patents by which the number of companies was limited to two, one under Killigrew, who may be regarded as the last royal jester, and another under D'Avenant. These two companies settled down to a comfortable monopoly, the first at the various Theatres Royal, the second at the Duke's houses in Lincoln's Inn Fields and in Dorset Garden. In 1682 both were amalgamated into one, and remained so until the year 1695 saw the secession of a number of the best actors. The first point we note, then, is this, that for thirteen years one theatre supplied all the needs of London, and that for

Plan of Whitehall Stage by John Webb

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Photograph by the Victoria and Albert Museum

the other twenty-seven years to the end of the century only two theatres were running. When we remember that a smaller London of thirty or forty years previously had been able to support as many as six theatres running concurrently it becomes obvious that some great change had come over the playgoing public. That change is really the culmination of the gradual movement we have seen growing in the early years of the century. The theatre

proves conclusively that the typical audience was composed of the courtiers, their ladies, the beaux, and the 'wits,'

The playhouse

e upper classes,

that playhouse

were distinctly calculated by the authors to appeal to a courtly and Cavalier audience. It is this that explains both the rise of the heroic tragedy and the elaboration of the comedy of manners The one appealed to artificial

of the audience upon Restoration drama; at present a few words must be said concerning the actual structure of the playhouses and on the influence exercised by that structure upon the plays of the time. In three particular

players were not of the square inn-yard type, but were converted tennis-courts, oblong in shape. It is obvious that in houses of this sort the Elizabethan platform stage would have been out of the question; on the other hand, tradition pointed to a stage surrounded by the audience. A compromise was effected whereby a proscenium arch, unknown in the early seventeenth century save in the masques at Court, cut off part of the theatre, and an 'apron' in the form of a semicircle jutted out into the midst of the pit. There is here the ideal union of two mutually opposing systems of staging. Intimacy with the audience could still be secured by the players when they moved to the forward portion of the stage, and yet there remained the possibility of scenic display in the back portion of the house. We shall expect to find, therefore, and do find, that the plays written for this theatre show many anomalies. They are transition plays, at one and the same time looking back to the earlier platform stage with its free conventions, and looking forward to the development of a new theatre. For the first few years it is natural that the dramatists should not have learned how to write for the altered stage; their plays are cast in the Elizabethan form. Gradually, however, the exigencies of the changed conditions made themselves felt; playwrights realized the needs of the actors, and their plays, because of the influence of the scenery, became more co-ordinate and less scattered in subject-matter than the plays written in Shakespeare's time. Only in the very spectacular productions of the period do we discover shifting of locality such as appears, for example, in *Antony and Cleopatra* or in *King Lear*.

The presence of this scenery, added to the fact that lighting of a primitive sort accompanied all plays, led to the loss of one important Elizabethan convention. We have already seen how Shakespeare was forced to explain to his audience where his actors were and at what time the action was supposed to take place. This was rendered necessary because of the lack of scenic arrangements and of lighting. In the Restoration theatre (which may be

regarded fundamentally as the modern theatre) such notices to the audience would have been superfluous, and consequently as we study the drama of this period we can see them slowly disappearing, year by year. More and more was left to the scene designer and to the machinist; more, that is to say, was left to the eye and less to the ear. While this made for greater concentration in the plays themselves and prevented minor dramatists from wandering into would-be poetical disquisitions on Nature's loveliness, it took away to a certain extent from the beauty of the plays. Many of the most gorgeous passages of pure poetry in the Elizabethan drama had been essentially undramatic save for the fact that they were rendered necessary by the typ of playhouse; and the loss of opportunities for the natura introduction of such passages tended to kill the purel poetic drama.

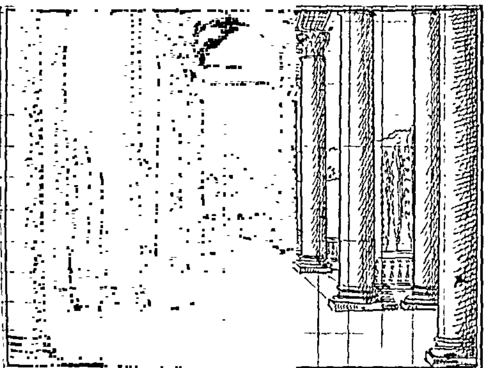
The third point which is to be noted concerning th [illegible]

[illegible] thing. Cynically enough he pretended he was bringin about the innovation in the interests of morality. Probabl no one believed him, but on the other hand no one objected and a woman first appeared on the English stage to speal the prologue to *Othello* and play the part of Desdemona [illegible]

[illegible] bad, which these women brought into the theatre. It i unnecessary, too, to point to the increased immoralit which they aided in settling on the stage. But one influenc

may be noted here. For the most part, the early seventeenth-century writers were diffident about bringing women into their plays. There is a Rosalind and a Celia in *As You Like It*, but they are vastly outnumbered by their men companions. There are only two women in *Hamlet*, three in *Othello*, two in *Macbeth*, three in *King Lear*. With the advent of actresses, on the other hand, it became more and more necessary to provide suitable parts for the Nell Gwyns and the Mrs Bracegirdles. When D'Avenant (if he indeed be guilty) came to alter *Macbeth* he saw the necessity of enlarging the parts of both Lady Macbeth and Lady Macduff; and when the same author in collaboration with Dryden sought to improve *The Tempest* the two authors provided Miranda with a sister and Ariel with a spirit mate. This tendency, noticeable in the adaptations of Shakespeare, is visible everywhere in the more original tragedies and comedies of the time. With the Restoration the position of women in the dramatic world was thoroughly established.

This consideration of the influence of theatrical conditions upon the drama of the late seventeenth century might be infinitely extended, but the features noted above appear to be those which are of main importance, necessary to be borne in mind whenever the works of this period are especially considered. As with the Elizabethan dramatic literature, it is possible to estimate aright the plays produced in the reign of Charles II only when these plays are related intimately with the theatre wherein they were first performed. The drama of this later period, based as it was on the drama of the past, yet developed certain new tendencies, tendencies which are dependent largely upon the audience and upon the theatre.



DESIGN BY JOHN WEBB FOR ORRERY'S "MUSTAPHA" 222

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Photograph by the Victoria and Albert Museum

CHAPTER II

THE HEROIC TRAGEDY AND THE RETURN TO SHAKESPEARE

Love and Honour Drama

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... of diverse forces. Each, regarded from one point of view, is the lineal descendant of some species of pre-Restoration drama, yet each is coloured and modified by the influence ... The ... those ... umont a ... c ... these two sentiments, and the exaggerated, *flamboyant* language which is now associated most nearly with the tra... more tha... On the ... Boyle, Earl of Orrery, who was the first to attempt the introduction of the new style into England, that the employment of rime in place of blank verse in these heroic plays was due ... the enthusiasm ... hat the Restora- ... accord with the prevailing tastes in Paris. The heroic drama, with its grandiloquent sentiments and its air of exaggeration, is to be regarded in one way as the representative in the

CHAPTER II

THE HEROIC TRAGEDY AND THE RETURN TO SHAKESPEARE

Love and Honour Drama

THE period of the Restoration is remarkable for

the opera, and the farce are the chief, all display a union of diverse forces. Each, regarded from one point of view, is the lineal descendant of some species of pre-Restoration drama, yet each is coloured and modified by the influence

these two sentiments, and the exaggerated, flamboyant language which is now associated most nearly with the

theatre of the mood and atmosphere of the heroic poem, a form of literature which, popularized by men such as Chamberlayne and D'Avenant, had come from France in the middle of the century. The comedy of manners, likewise, is an admixture of similar ingredients. Its source lies in the endeavours of Jonson in the comedy of humours and in those of Fletcher in the comedy of intrigue. Everywhere we can trace in its form the older strains altered a trifle to suit the tastes of a later age. The witty, debonair, callous, philandering air of Congreve's muse is intimately akin to the sterner and more satiric muse of Jonson. Yet much of what we know now as the comedy of manners would have remained unwritten, or would have been written in a different style, had the English theatre not possessed Molière for a guide and a model. It is not, as some modern critics have sought to make out, that the English comedy of the late seventeenth century was nothing more than a weakened replica of the contemporary comedy of France, but we must never neglect the influence exerted, directly and indirectly, upon Etherege and Wycherley and Congreve by the master of French comedy. The same analysis of forces holds good, also, for farce and opera. Farcical elements enough are apparent in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century comedies, and the later farce of the Restoration and Georgian eras owes a great deal of its vitality to older examples. The first afterpiece, however, and the first true English farce—Otway's *The Cheats of Scapin* (1676; printed 1677)—was but an adaptation from the French, and many of the other similar pieces produced in the last decades of the seventeenth century and in the years that followed were either alterations of French farcical works or farcical renderings of true comedies originally written by Molière and his companions. In the same way the Restoration opera, made glorious by the music of Purcell, was a purely native development, even although it might not have come into being had it not been for the operatic efforts of Renascence Italy and the cognate efforts of contemporary France. It cannot be too often asserted that, despite the immense change which had come over the



SCENE IN SETTLE'S "THE EMPRESS OF MOROCCO" 224

English theatre with the advent of Charles II, the sub- ... latter half ... , English ... which had risen to surge with Shakespeare, was still eddying along the shore, slightly disturbed but not clearly altered in its course by neighbouring cross-currents.

In the realm of tragedy the heroic element already ... is ... d ... tr ... e ... l- ...

... genius. The wilder excesses of the heroic style as well as the later dullness of the pseudo-classic formality were alike tempered by reminiscences of *Hamlet* and *Othello* an ...
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Elizabethan temper. For the first twenty years of the Restoration period, on the other hand, the heroic mood ... occasional ... one or two ... 1642. This ... crudities, its violent ...
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boots, which closes with his going out, one leg booted an the other bootless, can be paralleled by equally ridiculou scenes in plays written in the fond expectation that they would arouse those emotions of awe and pity which Aristotl finds the chief ends of all tragic endeavour. Such may be found not only in minor works as Pordage's *Herod and Mariamne* (1673) or Settle's *The Empress of Morocco* (1673), but in the better efforts of John Dryden himself.

Undoubtedly Dryden is the greatest, and perhaps the first, who took up this style of writing. The uncertainty concerning his claims to priority is due to the fact that it is not ascertainable now when the first production of the earliest effort of Roger Boyle, Earl of Orrery, took place. Two things, however, are clear. Dryden was anticipated in the actual writing of heroic plays not only by Orrery, who was engaged on a drama of this type as early as 1660, but by an otherwise unknown George Cartwright, who has left us a single tragedy, *The Heroick Lover* (1661), framed on the model made popular several years later. It is possible, however, that none of these earlier plays was acted until several years had elapsed, although a fair claim has been made for an early production of Orrery's *The Black Prince*, and Dryden clearly stands forward as the popularizer, if not the prime mover, of this type of drama. It was he who gave it impetus; it was he who, by his recantation, aided in drawing men's minds once more away from rime and heroics to blank verse and Shakespeare. Starting with *The Indian Queen* (1664; printed 1665), a drama written in collaboration with Sir Robert Howard, he led the van of the love and honour playwrights until the appearance of *All for Love, or The World well Lost* 1677; printed 1678) showed that he was growing tired of is long-loved mistress, rime. Between 1664 and 1677 e gave at least five of these dramas to the theatre—*he Indian Emperour, or, The Conquest of Mexico by the paniards* (1665; printed 1667), *Tyrannick Love, or the yal Martyr* (1669; printed 1670), *The Conquest of Granada the Spaniards: In Two Parts* (1670; printed 1672), d *Aureng-Zebe* (1675; printed 1676)—besides the rimed

'opera' wrought out of Milton's *Paradise Lost* entitled *The State of Innocence, and Fall of Man* (printed 1677). All the five heroic plays are built upon a set plan. There is in each a hero of superhuman prowess and with superhuman ideals; there is a heroine of unsurpassed constancy and beauty; there is an inner conflict in the minds of several of the characters between love and honour; there is a stirring story of fighting and martial enthusiasm, filled with intense dramatic interest. In general scope this heroic tragedy of Dryden's is surprisingly like the general scope of the Shakespearian drama, if we make allowances for the frequent happy ending which the Restoration author, probably influenced by the structure of epic and heroic poetry, saw fit to give to his plays. In both we find an [illegible] both there [illegible] .he dramas [illegible] linary life. If the heroic tragedy, however, is in one way a development of earlier forms of tragic endeavour it is a development carried to excess. Dryden's plays bear the same relation to those of Shakespeare as a gramophone record bears to the voice of a celebrated singer. The tones are exaggerated and made harsh; there is the continual drone of unrefined harmonies; a lack of delicacy and of subtlety pervades the whole. Unquestionably Dryden realized the sphere of true tragedy; he had some conception of the genuine ἰδέα of this type of drama; but his age would not permit him to work that ἰδέα out in its correct forms. The consequence is that we can do little else now but smile good-humouredly at the more apparent follies of the type. The psychology, the language, the atmosphere, of this heroic drama are all foreign to us.

There is, moreover, one outstanding want in all Dryden's plays. That want is the lack of passion, or the lack of adequate treatment of passionate scenes. The reaction from the overstrained emotions of Ford's degenerate tragedies took the form of a complete overthrow of the world of passion. Just as the poets, in an endeavour to secure some saner utterance than was provided by the

lesser metaphysical writers, turned to the heroic couplet and the realm of the intellect, so the dramatists endeavoured to escape the wilder sentiments of a Ford by adopting as their sphere common sense and reason. Tragedy, however, can rarely, if ever, be thus limited to an intellectual plane; passion is its very life-force and innermost being; nor was Dryden, reared on the poetry of the metaphysicals and of the pre-Restoration dramatists, entirely lacking in emotion. It is the emotion in him which makes him the greatest lyric-writer of his time; it is an undercurrent of emotion which makes *Mac Flecknoe* and *Absalom and Achitophel* such perfect satires. For tragedy, on the other hand, such undercurrents of passion are not sufficient; here a full abandon must be made to the sternest and most soul-embracing of emotions; and that the common sense and reasonableness of the age would not permit. Dryden, therefore, is fettered. He cannot throw himself wholeheartedly into the passions he would depict for us, with the consequence that his emotional scenes are stilted and unnatural even beyond the jingling tones of the heroic rime. One example of this may be sufficient, an example which helps to display the immense chasm which divides the Elizabethan from the Restoration theatre. The supernatural had been treated by Shakespeare with a delicacy and a sureness of touch unknown before save in the dramas of classical Greece, and Shakespeare by his example had influenced many of his successors. Dryden too, in *The Conquest of Granada*, attempts a scene of like nature, but a comparison between the following lines and those which accompany the apparition of Hamlet's father will at once display how lamentably Dryden failed in calling forth the emotions of fear and wonder and awe.

Almanzor. A hollow Wind comes whistling through that Door;
And a cold Shiv'ring seizes me all o'er:
My Teeth, too, chatter with a sudden Fright:
These are the Raptures of too fierce Delight!
The Combat of the Tyrants, Hope and Fear;
Which Hearts, for want of Field-room, cannot bear.
I grow impatient; this, or that's the Room:
I'll meet her; now, methinks, I hear her come.

[*He goes to the Door; the Ghost of his Mother meets him. He starts back: The Ghost stands in the Door.*

Almanzor. Well may'st thou make thy Boast, whate'er thou art,
Thou art the first e'er made *Almanzor* start.
My Legs—
Shall bear me to thee in their own Despight:
I'll rush into the Covert of thy Night,
And pull thee backward by the Shrowd, to Light
Or else I'll squeeze thee, like a Bladder, there;
And make thee groan thy self away to Air.

[*The Ghost retires.*

So, art thou gone! Thou canst no Conquest boast:
I thought what was the Courage of a Ghost —
—The grudging of my Ague yet remains:
My Blood, like Isicles, hangs in my Veins,
And does not drop: Be Master of that Door,
We two will not disturb each other more.
I err'd a little, but Extreams may join;
That Door was Hell's, but this is Heav'n's and mine!

[*Goes to the other Door, and is met again by the Ghost.*

Again! by Heav'n I do conjure thee, speak.
What art thou, Spirit? and what dost thou seek?

[*The Ghost comes on softly after the Conjuration; and Almanzor retires to the middle of the Stage.*

Ghost. I am the Ghost of her who gave thee Birth;
The airy Shadow of her mould'ring Earth.
Love of thy Father me through Seas did guide;
On Seas I bore thee, and on Seas I dy'd.
I dy'd; and for my winding Sheet a Wave
I had; and all the Occan for my Grave.
But, when my Soul to Bliss did upward move,
I wander'd round the Chrystal Walls above;
But found th' Eternal Fence so steeply high,
That, when I mounted to the middle Sky,
I flagg'd, and flutter'd down; and could not fly
Then, from the Battlements of th' Heav'nly Tow'r,
A Watchman Angel bid me wait this Hour;
And told me I had yet a Task assign'd,
To warn that little Pledge I left behind;
And to divert him, ere it were too late,
From Crimes unknown, and Errors of his Fate.

Almanzor. Speak, Holy Shade; thou Parent-form, speak on: [*Bowing.*
Instruct thy Mortal Elemented Son;
(For here I wander, to my self unknown)

lesser metaphysical writers, turned to the heroic couplet and the realm of the intellect, so the dramatists endeavoured to escape the wilder sentiments of a Ford by adopting as their sphere common sense and reason. Tragedy, however, can rarely, if ever, be thus limited to an intellectual plane; passion is its very life-force and innermost being; nor was Dryden, reared on the poetry of the metaphysicals and of the pre-Restoration dramatists, entirely lacking in emotion. It is the emotion in him which makes him the greatest lyric-writer of his time; it is an undercurrent of emotion which makes *Mac Flecknoe* and *Absalom and Achitophel* such perfect satires. For tragedy, on the other hand, such undercurrents of passion are not sufficient; here a full abandon must be made to the sternest and most soul-embracing of emotions; and that the common sense and reasonableness of the age would not permit. Dryden, therefore, is fettered. He cannot throw himself whole-heartedly into the passions he would depict for us, with the consequence that his emotional scenes are stilted and unnatural even beyond the jingling tones of the heroic rime. One example of this may be sufficient, an example which helps to display the immense chasm which divides the Elizabethan from the Restoration theatre. The supernatural had been treated by Shakespeare with a delicacy and a sureness of touch unknown before save in the dramas of classical Greece, and Shakespeare by his example had influenced many of his successors. Dryden too, in *The Conquest of Granada*, attempts a scene of like nature, but a comparison between the following lines and those which accompany the apparition of Hamlet's father will at once display how lamentably Dryden failed in calling forth the emotions of fear and wonder and awe.

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And pull thee backward by the Shrowd, to Light.
Or else I'll squeeze thee, like a Bladder, there;
And make thee groan thy self away to Air.

[*The Ghost retires.*

So, art thou gone! Thou canst no Conquest boast:
I thought what was the Courage of a Ghost.—
—The grudging of my Ague yet remains:
My Blood, like Isicles, hangs in my Veins,
And does not drop: Be Master of that Door,
We two will not disturb each other more.
I err'd a little, but Extreams may join;
That Door was Hell's, but this is Heav'n's and mine!

[*Goes to the other Door, and is met again by the Ghost.*

Again! by Heav'n I do conjure thee, speak.
What art thou, Spirit? and what dost thou seek?

[*The Ghost comes on softly after the Conjuration; and Almanzor retires to the middle of the Stage.*

Ghost. I am the Ghost of her who gave thee Birth;
The airy Shadow of her mould'ring Earth.
Love of thy Father me through Seas did guide;
On Seas I bore thee, and on Seas I dy'd
I dy'd; and for my winding Sheet a Wave
I had; and all the Ocean for my Grave.
But, when my Soul to Bliss did upward move,
I wander'd round the Chrystal Walls above;
B [illegible]
T [illegible]
I [illegible]
Then, from the Battlements of th' Heav'nly Tow'r,
A Watchman Angel bid me wait this Hour;
And told me I had yet a Task assign'd,
To warn that little Pledge I left behind;
And to divert him, ere it were too late,
From Crimes unknown, and Errors of his Fate.

Almanzor. Speak, Holy Shade; thou Parent-form, speak on: [*Bowing.*
Instruct thy Mortal Elemented Son;
(For here I wander, to my self unknown.)

But O, thou better Part of Heav'nly Air,
Teach me, kind Spirit, (since I'm still thy Care)
My Parents Names:
If I have yet a Father, let me know,
To whole old Age my humble Youth must bow;
And pay its Duty, if he Mortal be;
Or Adoration, if a Mind, like thee.

The selection of such a passage as this for quotation must not, of course, be taken as implying that there is nothing of worth in the heroic drama. Speech after speech might be given to prove that Dryden was not only a master of language, but a poet and a true playwright. All that may be said is that the limitations of his age, themselves the consequences of romantic excess, prevented him from expressing to the full those ideas and those emotions which, had he been born forty years earlier, might have entitled him to rank among the greatest of the post-Shakespearians.

Alongside of Dryden roared and ranted a number of other heroic dramatists, most of whom are of little account. Elkanah Settle, with his wretched *Cambyses, King of Persia* (1671) and his not much finer *The Empress of Morocco* (1673), hardly deserves a better treatment than Dryden himself meted out to him. His plays evidently won a certain success in their own time, for the latter drama has the distinction of being the first fully illustrated play printed in England, but they possess nothing of Dryden's power of thought or of diction. John Crowne's work is almost equally negligible. *The Destruction of Jerusalem by Titus Vespasian* (1677) is his best work in this style, but even it seems dull and uninteresting when compared with *The Conquest of Granada.* Of all the rout of heroic rimesters barely three stand forward as possessing unquestioned value. Roger Boyle, Earl of Orrery, already mentioned as a predecessor of Dryden in this style, is in some ways the least of these. A certain strength he has, and a decided power of expressing his thoughts in a capable but not over-musical heroic verse. His claim to remembrance rests, however, not so much on these qualities as on some peculiar features of his themes and of the treatment of those themes. It is noticeable, in the first place,

that Orrery's plays are modelled on a plan clearly distinct

Shakespearian tragedy. Orrery is more deeply influenced by the rimed tragedy of France. His atmosphere has a decided chill, an attempt at classical restraint, which marks him out as the follower of Corneille and Racine rather than of the Elizabethans The peculiar fact is, however, that, deeply influenced as he was by French example, he went back in some of his plays to an earlier English dramatic tradition, lost in the post-Shakespearian period. If in *The Tragedy of Mustapha, Son of Solyman*

of these native historical themes is almost totally unhistorical, and that it owes nothing to sixteenth-century example, yet the very fact that Orrery thought of English history at a time when men's minds were filled with grotesque visions of Peru and Persia and Egypt shows that he had a mind of his own, and his action must have had some influence upon later dramatists who turned once more for inspiration to the historical events of their native land. It must, of course, be confessed that Orrery had but small importance in his own time. Charles may have approved of his dramas, but his lack of stirring action, his chastened language, his efforts at restraint, were ill suited to compare

Dryden.
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Of different importance is Nathaniel Lee, the Bedlamite. This man, who first appeared on the dramatic horizon in

the full flush of heroicism with his *Tragedy of Nero, Emperour of Rome* (1674; printed 1675) and who continued to provide the theatre with rimed and blank-verse pieces until 1689, was one of those unhappy creatures who, born with an undue share of enthusiasm and passion into a world of intellect and reason, found relief only in madness. He is akin to Cowper and Smart and Blake, light flashing from his brain in lurid intervals, gleaming all the more brightly because of the surrounding gloom. The follies of Lee's rhapsodies for long obscured his real powers, but we now, in an age when dispassionate judgment is possible, can see beneath the absurdities of *Sophonisba: or, Hannibal's Overthrow* (1675; printed 1676), of *Gloriana, or the Court of Augustus Cæsar* (1676), and of *Theodosius; or, The Force of Love* (1680) elements which call for our whole-hearted praise. Lee possessed something of the mighty voice of the Elizabethans. His passion is infecting, rising as it does to the rich sweeping of tumultuous verse. He has little form in his dramas; every one of them lacks the finished care of a master, but if we may be permitted to judge of plays by individual scenes—always a dangerous course—we must accord him a high place among the dramatists who came between the age of Charles II and the age of Victoria.

The only other heroic writer who calls for individual mention here is Thomas Otway, who, before he penned his two brilliant masterpieces, gave a rimed *Alcibiades* (1675) and *Don Carlos, Prince of Spain* (1676) to the theatre. Both are marked by surer touches than may be found anywhere in the period save in the plays of Dryden. *Alcibiades* has many foolish scenes, but even in it there is a strength of utterance hard to overlook. In *Don Carlos* we reach one of the most perfect of these heroic dramas. The theme has more reality than is usual in the type, and the passions are not exaggerated out of all likeness to human emotions. The conflict in the breast of the son is well developed, and Otway shows himself here, at the very opening of his career, and working in a peculiarly difficult and circumscribed dramatic sphere, as the master which

he later proved himself conclusively to be in *The Orphan: or, The Unhappy Marriage* (1680) and in *Venice Preserv'd; or, A Plot Discover'd* (1682).

(ii) Blank-verse Tragedy

The mention of these two dramas brings us to an account of a dramatic development certainly influenced by, but distinct from, that of the heroic tragedy. This later dramatic development unquestionably was due to a new [illegible] In [illegible] [illegible]n wrote his [illegible], and Otway [illegible] two masterpieces, an adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* as *The History and Fall of Caius Marius* (1679; printed 1680). It seems alr[illegible] Sh[illegible] alr[illegible] 1678 or 1679. Pseudo-classicism, rapidly growing in power, aided in curbing the excesses of the heroic playwrights, but to Shakespeare we must look first for the cause of the change. *The Orphan* is not precisely a Shakespearian drama, but it has something of that higher and nobler conception of tragedy which is associated with the early seventeenth century. The plot is well known; how two brothers love one girl, how one of the brothers marries her secretly, and the other, thinking it all but a licentious assignation, anticipates his brother in the darkened room and brings tragedy to all three. The story is a poignant one, full of possibilities of which Otway has taken full advantage. There is here that mingling of human error with fatal purpose which marks out the greatest tragedy of all time. The two brothers and the unhappy Monimia seem, as it were, wrapped in the folds of some mysterious destiny; their thoughts and actions are warped from their original intent; and the tragedy consequently is more than a mere tale of human frailty. At the same time, it is the licentious passion of the one brother, and the innocent duplicity of the lovers, which immediately bring about the

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(ii) Blank-verse Tragedy

The mention of these two dramas brings us to an account of a dramatic development certainly influenced by, but distinct from, that of the heroic tragedy. This later dramatic development unquestionably was due to a new appreciation of Shakespeare. In 1677 Dryden wrote his *All for Love* in imitation of Shakespeare's style, and Otway produced, between his heroic plays and his two masterpieces, an adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* as *The History and Fall of Caius Marius* (1679; printed 1680). It seems [illegible] with [illegible] or the [illegible] after 1678 or 1679. Pseudo-classicism, rapidly growing in power, aided in curbing the excesses of the heroic playwrights, but to Shakespeare we must look first for the cause of the change. *The Orphan* is not precisely a Shakespearian drama, but it has something of that higher and nobler conception of tragedy which is associated with the early seventeenth century. The plot is well known; how two brothers love one girl, how one of the brothers marries her secretly, and the other, thinking it all but a licentious assignation, anticipates his brother in the darkened room and brings tragedy to all three. The story is a poignant one, full of possibilities of which Otway has taken full advantage. There is here that mingling of human error with fatal purpose which marks out the greatest tragedy of all time. The two brothers and the unhappy Monimia seem, as it were, wrapped in the folds of some mysterious destiny; their thoughts and actions are warped from their original intent; and the tragedy consequently is more than a mere tale of human frailty. At the same time, it is the licentious passion of the one brother, and the innocent duplicity of the lovers, which immediately bring about th

catastrophe. Only in one respect does Otway reduce this play to lower levels. His atmosphere, only too frequently, is that of pathos rather than tragic awe. The exciting of tears is his object rather than the conjuring forth of those deeper and richer emotions which leave us dry-eyed and aghast. In Otway's hands this element of pathos is not over-deeply stressed, but his example was destined to bring a sad array of lamentable and lachrymose dramas to the English stage. *Venice Preserv'd* has less of this element of pity. The theme is one of sterner emotions—the hard-hearted yet generous Pierre, the vacillating Jaffier, and the troubled Belvidera raising the drama above mere pathetic levels. Here perhaps the sense of fate is not so fully evident, although it is apparent in many scenes, but the psychological delineation of the characters is still more subtle and finely finished. The essential errors of these main figures are, too, well developed, and the tragedy seems to move forward logically toward its self-appointed end. Its only blemishes lie in the not wholly convincing madness of Belvidera in the final scene, and in the comic episodes, which, in spite of the defence of some modern critics, seem to destroy the general atmosphere of the drama.

Of Otway's power there is no other dramatist of this age except Dryden, and even Dryden never succeeded in producing such a master-work as *Venice Preserv'd*. *All for Love* is his finest achievement, and this drama has less of the true tragic spirit than Otway's. The theme, as is well known, is that of Antony and Cleopatra, although there are few verbal reminiscences of Shakespeare's play. Dryden's aim has here been to fuse the more formal elements of the pseudo-classic theory with the richer proportions of the Elizabethan theatre. He has cut out the multiplicity of scene, which at once adds to and detracts from the force of *Antony and Cleopatra*, and he has reduced the feelings of the chief characters to such standards as his contemporaries could understand and appreciate. It is undeniable that he has lost all of that high ardour and passionate romance which breathes from every scene of Shakespeare's play, but it is equally undeniable that he

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even *All for Love* shows the author too deeply fettered by the conditions under which it was written This greatest of all the Restoration writers seemed to fail in the theatre He had the dramatic sense developed to a high degree

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in *All for Love* and *The Orphan.* The first is pseudo-classicism, leading toward strictness of form, including th retention of the three unities, and toward chill of dialog and simplification of plot. The other, which takes divers forms, is the movement toward pathos and pity. Thes two tendencies ically the whole of trag ades of the seventeent of the eighteenth. Th that part of the pseud classical school which held most strictly to the 'rules' propriety and of good conduct, hardly obtained a secu

footing in the seventeenth century itself, and even in the Augustan age proper (from the reign of Anne to the last quarter of the eighteenth century) pseudo-classicism in the theatre seems to have been rather an undesirable element. The regular pseudo-classical plays were duly mounted and revived, but none proved genuinely popular, unless we assume that the success of Addison's *Cato* (1714) was due entirely to its own merits, and had nothing in it savouring of political prejudice. If the more extreme pseudo-classicists, however, had little hold during the Restoration period, the rules so cherished by them penetrated through all the realms of drama and came to influence greatly both comedy and tragedy. The simplified form of the Antony and Cleopatra story found in *All for Love* is directly traceable to the influence of these pseudo-classical ideals. All attempts were made to avoid romantic profusion of material, and gradually, with this simplification, there disappeared that richness of passion, that excess of emotion, from which the romantic genius ultimately takes its rise.

As a species of reaction to this, although frequently it took a course parallel to and even joined paths with the pseudo-classical movement, we find the development of pathetic and pitiful sentiments and scenes. This tendency has already become apparent in *The Orphan*, has been noted, indeed, several decades previously in some dramas of the period 1610–40. Now, however, it flourished most abundantly. Love and honour themes had probably led men to stress more deeply than in Elizabethan days the subject of amorous passion, so that by the end of the seventeenth century hardly any tragedy was penned which did not introduce as a main theme a tale of love, happy or disastrous. Inevitably this weakened the tone of late seventeenth-century tragedy. Instead of the vast, cataclysmic, elemental emotions, varied and diverse, which marked the tragedies of Shakespeare we find constant plaints and passages of amorous bombast which are difficult to read and in the sincerity of which we cannot believe. In accordance with this change of atmosphere went an

alteration of tragic plan. In Elizabethan times tragedy
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which—for few heroines were Amazons—she was banished. The advent of pathos, on the other hand, distinctly favoured the heroine, who came more and more to usurp the prominent position, until toward the end of the century
the hero has almost
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fully established the type, but the tendency can clearly be traced in the preceding decades. The most important predecessor of Rowe in this sphere was John Banks, who, starting with a couple of heroic dramas—*The Rival Kings: or The Loves of Oroondates and Statira* (1677) and *The Destruction of Troy* (1678; printed 1679)—passed from those to pen a series of pathetic plays on historical themes. *The Unhappy Favourite: or The Earl of Essex* (1681; printed 1682) was the first of these, followed by *Vertue Betray'd: or, Anna Bullen* (1682), *The Island Queens: Or, The Death of Mary, Queen of Scotland* (printed 1684), and *The Innocent Usurper; or, The Death of the Lady Jane Gray* (printed 1694). The titles of these tragedies clearly show their general scope. None is remarkable for great intrinsic excellence, although Banks was a more capable writer than is usually supposed, but their historical value is literally enormous. Several of these plays remained long on the stage; Rowe certainly was acquainted with them; so that Banks became one of the most powerful
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after his death was second only to that of Shakespeare himself.

(iii) Opera and Spectacle

These heroic, pathetic, and other movements all combined with a general operatic tendency. Scenery had, as we have seen, come into general use in this period of the Restoration, and along with this advent of scenery we have noted the tendency toward exaggeration and artificiality of plot and character. The age still retained that enthusiasm for music which was so marked a feature of the Elizabethan period, and this enthusiasm for music added to the other movements indicated above readily made way for the elaboration of the opera. To trace this development accurately it is here necessary to return to the dramatic work of Sir William D'Avenant, who is one of the inaugurators both of the heroic tragedy and of the opera. It has been already noted that he was the only person authorized during the Commonwealth *régime* to arrange theatrical performances, and no doubt he was enabled to do so only by representing that his performances were not of plays, but of musical entertainments. *The Siege of Rhodes* (1656), along with *The Cruelty of the Spaniards in Peru* (1658) and *The History of Sir Francis Drake* (1658; printed 1659), was a musical entertainment of this sort, written in rime and designed, on the lines of Italian opera, to be sung in recitative and *aria*. As a play, *The Siege of Rhodes* had its influence upon Dryden and other masters of the heroic tragedy, but it is valuable besides that for its position in the development of English opera. The new scenes, the accompaniment of the orchestra, the pleasant airs, all attracted the attention of playgoers, and before a few decades had passed other writers were striving along the same path. The first approach toward the opera in the Restoration period proper was in the direction of Shakespearian adaptation. *The Tempest*, after a considerable amount of sophisticated alteration and addition, was made operatic by Dryden and Shadwell; *Macbeth* similarly was operatized by an unknown author, who has been conjecturally identified with D'Avenant. The adaptations proved popular, as is witnessed by the numerous

references, scathing as well as flattering, to the new fashion.

penned his *Albion and Albanius* (1685) and his *King Arthur: or, The British Worthy* (1692). D'Urfey, Settle, and others vied with one another in producing similar works, each more gorgeous and full of telling incidents and novelties than the last. These operas, it may be observed, were

scenes of a comic character. With the aid of Purcell the former type held the field all through the Restoration period, although a French opera in recitative was produced in London in the early seventies of the century; but once the fashion for opera had fully established itself it was inevitable that efforts should be made to introduce on the

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to have been included in the following chapter of this book, it may be well to glance here at the early development of the Italian form.

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English, and the original music was adapted to the conditions under which the works were produced. Soon, however, it was found that the stock of English vocalists

was limited; every one praised the voices of Italy; and accordingly high sums were offered by the managers to tempt away from the Continent a few of the more noted singers. Even yet the production of operas in the Italian tongue was delayed, the managers adopting the expedient of making the English singers perform in English and the Italians in Italian. The confusions and absurd situations which arose from this convention may be found chronicled satirically by Addison in several well-known *Spectator* papers. Such a compromise could not endure for long, so that we are not surprised to find within a few years the appearance of Italian operas in all their original glory. Once established upon the stage, these operas definitely held their position. Händel came to England and aided in arousing still more enthusiasm for the type; hardly a year passed by without the production of several new works; the Italian opera became the fashionable haunt of society, and in its own way aided in the weakening of native dramatic work.

The advent of the Italian opera had several well-marked influences upon the English stage. The dramatic operas were rapidly cast into the background. *The Tempest* and *The Prophetess* still appeared every season at one or another theatre, but few new works of the same class were written. While the older successes still retained something of their charm, the form was clearly felt to be old-fashioned, and men, when they tried to write something which might rival the Italian works, penned their verses in recitative and *aria*. Beyond this, however, the new fashion placed its mark upon the age. The success of the opera-house frequently caused a corresponding failure of the other theatres. Upper-class society in the eighteenth century was often plagued with the curse of indigence, and the high prices charged for opera subscriptions left many without the means of patronizing regular plays. A new opera, too, took away a good part of the spectators from the ordinary theatres, so that the many complaints which were uttered against the novelty were not by any means ill founded.

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comedies, added to the general popularity of the opera, unquestionably laid the basis of that typical eighteenth-century dramatic development, the ballad-farce or the ballad-opera. It were proceeding too far ahead to enter into a discussion of *The Beggar's Opera* and of its successors in this chapter, but a true appreciation of Gay's efforts cannot be secured without a realization of the importance in those years of the Italian opera.

CHAPTER III

COMEDY IN RESTORATION TIMES

COMEDIES OF HUMOURS AND OF INTRIGUE

THE heroic tragedy and the opera gave no great masterpiece to the theatre. Some features of beauty may be discovered in both, but there is to be found no single work of either kind capable of being placed alongside of *The Orphan* or of *Venice Preserv'd.* True creative power had left the realm of serious drama; all that is new and invested with individuality of expression is to be sought for in the sphere of comedy. The reason for this is not far to seek. The age, as has been shown previously, had abandoned the ways of poetry and was searching for truth not in the world of the imagination, but in the world of common sense and reason. The rich music of the Elizabethan singers and the bizarre stanzas of the metaphysical poets were alike displaced in favour of the heroic couplet, a verse-form which demanded for its successful execution little beyond a good ear, a sense of proportion, and a vivid intellect. With the appearance of this reign of common sense, moreover, a new prose was discovered, a prose fitted for the enunciation of logical thoughts and witty fancies. More and more men turned to this prose for a medium in which to express their desires, so that comedy, that species of drama which alone permitted of prose dialogue, became the most typical form of theatrical literature, and, at the same time, the form most capable of expressing the very temper and spirit of the age. Beyond Otway the Restoration period could produce no tragic dramatist of the first rank; but in comedy it nourished several of the greatest of English masters, who between them succeeded in making this one of the most notable eras in the history of the theatre.

It is this age which is associated with the rise and develop-

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dramatists, that, after all, their works form but an infinitesimal portion of the many comedies produced during these years. None of the first three wrote more than four dramas each, and the latter two composed most of their plays in the eighteenth cen
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Shakespeare; and even Dryden, much as he revered the name of Shakespeare, did not dare to place the one above the other. The influence of Jonson on the period is twofold. We find, in the first place, a number of comedies obviously modelled directly upon his style; and, besides these, we discover many dramas which, while not prevailingly Jonsonian in essence, betray clearly the influence of his work in dialogue, scene, or character. Even the masters of the comedies of manners frequently showed that they had learned part of their art at least from the early seventeenth-century playwright.

Of all the pure Jonsonians Thomas Shadwell is without doubt the chief. No man more insisted on Jonson's greatness; no man attempted more to reproduce something of the atmosphere of *Every Man in his Humour* or of *Bartholomew Fair*. Shadwell has long been neglected. It is probable that his quarrel with Dryden proved fatal to him, and he has come down to us as an unmitigated fool who never even deviated into sense. That this is a false judgment will be admitted by anyone who has read any of Shadwell's work. The truth is that he was no mean

descendant of Jonson. His style, certainly, is rough, lacking that refinement and careful polish which distinguishes the more masterly Augustan prose, but he had a true *flair* for the theatre, and a considerable skill in the depicting of humorous types. In some ways he is the truest mirror of the age that we possess. Congreve may show more brilliantly the fine wit of the time, but his very brilliance takes away from the reality of the portrait; Shadwell, rising to less exalted heights, displays more accurately the ordinary existence of his age. Starting with a decided success in *The Sullen Lovers: Or, the Impertinents* (1668) he continued a chequered career up to his death in 1692, his last play, *The Volunteers: or The Stock Jobbers* (1693), appearing just after his death. Shadwell's dramatic work is of various types, for he patronized opera, pastoral, and tragedy as well as his more favoured *métier* of comedy. In the comic sphere, moreover, he allowed, particularly in his later life, several elements unconnected with the Jonsonian style to enter in. There are in his works characteristics which have led Professor Saintsbury to claim for him the title of a father of the comedy of manners, and there are traceable likewise some sentimental touches which show that Shadwell felt the impress of the changing spirit of the age. Of his eighteen dramas three or four stand forward as deserving of more particular attention—the early *Sullen Lovers*, *The Humorists* (1670; printed 1671), *Epsom Wells* (1672; printed 1673), *The Virtuoso* (1676), *The Squire of Alsatia* (1688), and *Bury Fair* (1689). In each of these we meet with a lively story of contemporary life, a multitude of eccentric and extravagant humours, and a love-plot of none too pure a nature. It must be confessed that Shadwell's plays are somewhat vulgar, for he is too true a child of his time to be prurient or puritanical. There is not, however, in his works any objectionable suggestiveness. He is frank and outspoken, and whatever of vulgarity may offend us to-day is seen to be the result of a bluntness of expression rather than of a definitely vitiated taste. Shadwell's main defect arises from his over-slavish imitation of Jonson; never does he seem capable of throwing off

the tyranny of his master and striking out on lines of his

rendered them more pre- than post-Restoration in temperament, deliberately adopted the humours style in all its original harshness.

Of these writers Sir Robert Howard, brother-in-law of Dryden, is first in point of time. His one pure comedy,

many similar types in later years. With Howard may be mentioned the rougher and more plebeian John Lacy, who in *The Old Troop: or, Monsieur Raggou* (*c.* 1665; printed 1672) contributed another anti-Puritan satire to the theatre. Besides this play Lacy has left us an adaptation of Shakespeare in *Sauny the Scott: or, The Taming of the Shrew* (1667; printed 1698), one of Molière in *The Dumb Lady, or, The Farrier Made Physician* (1669; printed 1672), and a more original work in *Sir Hercules Buffoon, or, The Poetical Squire* (1684). All of these are marked by the same features, a tendency to follow Jonson in the depicting of exaggerated humours, a certain roughness and vulgarity of texture, and a decided propensity toward farce. This last characteristic of Lacy's plays may be due to the fact that he himself was an actor, and consequently was fully alive to all the possibilities inherent in stage action for the summoning forth of laughter. A companion of Lacy in the fields of farcical humours is John Wilson, whose comedy of *The Cheats* (1662; printed 1664) has lately been rescued from the oblivion into which it fell in the nineteenth century. It has certainly an amusing plot and some fairly ludicrous dialogue, but it is marred, like most of these Jonsonian works, by coarseness and lack of delicacy in style and in treatment.

As has already been noted, these comedies of humours,

even from the first, were by way of being a trifle out of date. The age had attained an added refinement in language and in outer culture, so that the temper of the Elizabethan period, more manly but less delicate, seemed almost 'Gothic' to the airy Cavaliers of the Stuart Court. Dryden consequently was acting more in accordance with the changing tendencies of the age when, in his comedies, he strove to unite the strength of Jonson, the courtly spirit of Beaumont and Fletcher, and the new air of intellectual wit. Had Dryden possessed more of the debonair, outwardly brilliant, but not necessarily profound, temperament of Etherege and of his successors he might have succeeded in founding the comedy of manners. As it is, his undercurrent of emotion, his lack of fine wit, his inability to throw himself completely into the thoughtless follies and amusements of his time, prevented him from capturing the precise note of the manners school. He stands as a link between the earlier and the later, incapable of casting off his enthusiasm for the Elizabethan drama, yet not content merely to reproduce, as Wilson and Lacy strove to do, the exact style of the earlier period. With *The Wild Gallant* (1663; printed 1669) Dryden commenced his theatrical career. This play is the nearest of all his comedies to previous models, the inspiration for it having been obviously derived from Jonson's dramas; but even here the Restoration author showed that he felt the needs of his own age. In painting the portraits of Lady Constant and Loveby he displayed clearly enough his consciousness that the Stuart society for whom he was writing demanded something more than the rough satire which Jonson had thrown into his early seventeenth-century plays. *The Wild Gallant* is not a good comedy, but it shows the main features of Dryden's style, features he was to delineate more perfectly in *The Rival Ladies* (1664) and in *Secret Love, or The Maiden Queen* (1667; printed 1668). Both of these last-mentioned plays are tragi-comedies in the sense that a wholly serious and almost heroic plot is paralleled by another theme as typically comic. It is the latter alone which concerns us here. In *Secret Love* Dryden reached

[illegible]

and Doralice in *Marriage A-la-mode* (1672; printed 1673), Ascanio and Hippolita in *The Assignation; or, Love in a Nunnery* (1672; printed 1673), Mercury and Phædra in [illegible]

He owes a debt to Jonson, chiefly in his minor characters, although in *Sr Martin Mar-all, or the Feign'd Innocence* (1667; printed 1668) he produced a play in which the principal characters are humours; he owes, too, a debt to Beaumont and Fletcher, his main plots being framed on the style of the comedy of intrigue; above all, he strikes out on a path of his own in striving to delineate something of the new spirit of the age. In thus fusing together many diverse elements Dryden did a great service to the English theatre, but the very fact that he did so has to a certain extent taken from his posthumous fame. His comedies, fine as they are and excellently fitted for stage representation, have not that individual flavour which is so noticeable in the works of Etherege and of Congreve. There is, too, one other thing which makes them less acceptable to modern readers. Congreve dwells almost wholly in the world of the intellect; his amours are not of passion, not of the heart, but of the head. Dryden, as has been noted, still retained something of the Elizabethan age in him, and as a consequence his scenes of licence may strike us as being

often more immoral than similar scenes in the comedies of manners. This statement, of course, cannot be pressed too far, as many situations given by the dramatists of manners are as vulgar as anything in Dryden's works, but it seems that there is at least a modicum of truth in the assertion.

Few of the many other dramatists who patronized comedy during these years can be dealt with here. Most of the ordinary works written for the theatres are dull and uninteresting and demand no special attention. There are, however, a few particular writers who deserve at least brief mention. Of these Mrs Aphra Behn is the first. As Shadwell is the representative of the comedy of humours in this period, she is the chief representative of the pure comedy of intrigue. Her dramatic career started in 1670 with the appearance of a tragi-comedy, *The Forc'd Marriage, or the Jealous Bridegroom*, but her chief activities in later years were to be confined to the realms of comedy proper. Her most popular success was *The Rover: Or, The Banish't Cavaliers* (1677; second part 1680), but besides this she has several plays well worth reading, especially *The Dutch Lover* (1673), *The Town-Fopp: or Sir Timothy Tawdrey* (1676; printed 1677), *Sir Patient Fancy* (1678), and *The City-Heiress: or, Sir Timothy Treat-all* (1682). There is little of wit in any of these comedies, but there is an amount of intrigue cleverly worked out and a decided skill in comic portraiture. Vivacity is her chief merit; a bustling movement dominates all her works. This species of comedy of intrigue, made popular by the Spanish tastes of the Court, was adopted by a few other writers, such as John Crowne in *Sir Courtly Nice: or, It Cannot Be* (1685), but it was not taken up again by any author with the same enthusiasm until the appearance of Mrs Centlivre in the eighteenth century.

Of little intrinsic importance, but of considerable historical value, two minor dramatists, Nahum Tate and Edward Ravenscroft, must now be considered. Both were varied playwrights, producing tragedies and tragi-comedies as well as purely comic works, but their merit lies almost wholly in the last-mentioned species. To them more than

to any others we owe the development and establishment of English farce. *A Duke and No Duke* (1684; printed 1685) and *Cuckolds-Haven: or, an Alderman No Conjurer* (1685) by Tate, and the series of lighter pieces by Ravenscroft starting with *The Citizen turn'd Gentleman* (1672) and ending with *The Anatomist: or, the Sham Doctor* (1697), provided the theatres with sufficient farcical comedies in the last two decades of the seventeenth century. In its initial stages the farce was not very original in theme and plan. The majority of Tate's and Ravenscroft's works are merely crude renderings of previous comedies *A Duke and No Duke* is thus an adaptation of a comedy by Cockain, and *Cuckolds-Haven* of Jonson's *Eastward Ho*; *The Citizen turn'd Gentleman* is derived from *Le bourgeois gentilhomme*, and *The Anatomist* plainly shows its indebtedness to Molière. This development of farce, indeed, better than any other [illegible] taste of the age. The [illegible] eary of even the fine [illegible] tter pleased with the [illegible] ian than with brilliant [illegible] aracter; they desired their Molière and their Jonson in skeleton shape rather than clad in the living form with the full flush of vitality upon them.

This farcical strain, added to features of a spectacular and operatic kind, is to be found likewise in the plays of Thomas D'Urfey, a writer perhaps better known for his songs and shorter lyrics than for his dramatic work. D'Urfey is a more capable playwright than either Ravenscroft or Tate, but his plays are, like theirs, mainly adaptations of other works, or else patchworks of farcical scenes taken from diverse sources *Madam Fickle: or the Witty False One* (1676; printed 1677), his first play, is thus merely a collection of incidents taken from at least four early seventeenth-century dramas, and the same is true of his next play, *The Fool Turn'd Critick* (1676; printed 1678). D'Urfey's works are numerous, but all have the same characteristics—a plentiful supply of theatrical wit, a large use of action for comic effect, a decided tendency to trust

rather to previous plots than to original invention, and a considerable employment of spectacular and musical devices. It will be noted later that in his very last plays, written after 1688, there is traceable another element—the beginning of a sentimental note which was to become the predominant feature of a whole school of dramatic writing in the eighteenth century.

(ii) The Comedy of Manners

In thus dealing with the minor comic authors of the Restoration period we have to a certain extent outlined the background for a brief analysis of the comedy of manners. So far several main tendencies have become apparent—the comedy of humours, the comedy of intrigue, and farce. Besides these there has been indicated a tentative movement toward a newer style in the comedies written by Dryden. Farce, as is evident, is largely a degeneration of true comic elements, and of it the masters of the comedy of manners made no use; but humours and intrigue enter freely into their works. Above all, they elaborated that new note struck by Dryden, filling their plays with a careless, frank, and debonair wit which marks them out as the inaugurators of a new comic species. This comedy of manners is almost wholly intellectual, emotion entering in only with Wycherley to colour the hard, crisp repartee and continual flashing of verbal rapier-thrust. It is, also, wholly aristocratic, the manners displayed being not those of men in general (such as Jonson showed in his humours), but the affectations and cultured veneer of fine society. For these men a manner was not a trait native to an individual, but a quality acquired by him from social intercourse. This fine society, thus mirrored in the comedy of manners, as it was the society of Charles II's Court, was *dilettante*, careless, intent only on pleasure and amorous intrigue, so that the comedy which depicted it has an air of abandon and of immorality which is markedly different from the manlier temper of the Elizabethan stage. For this not too much blame may be cast upon it. Comedy,

have said many critics from classical days to the time of Shakespeare, is above all other things a mirror of the age, and in displaying the life of their time Etherege and his followers were but adopting a sphere which had been occupied by many before them. If we condemn the society of the Restoration Court we need not thereby condemn the dramatists of that period; their object was to display the fashionable life of their time, not to indicate the superior mental and moral qualities of a past age or to prophesy concerning the improvements of the future. On a first reading, therefore, these comedies of manners may strike many as being immoral and vulgar; but for students of literature a true historical perspective must be gained. There are many characteristics of the Elizabethan period which now seem to us brutal and unrefined, but we do not cease to read Shakespeare because these are reflected in his plays. One of the greatest secrets of the study of literature is to regard individual works not in the light of present-day theories and of present-day beliefs, but in the spirit of the age in which they were produced It would be almost as absurd to refuse to read Æschylus because he was a pagan as to refuse to read Etherege because he was a courtier of the age of Charles II. There are, certainly, passages in the comedies of manners which overstep all bounds of decency and of good taste, where the dramatists have gone beyond even the excesses of the society of their time, and such passages can now be relished by none save a deliberate lover of pornographic literature. Scenes of this kind, however, are on the whole rarer in the comedies of manners than in other species of comedy during this age, and the determined intellectualism of the writers takes away to a certain extent from the evil effect of the particular scenes.

As is well known, the first true representative of this style was the courtier Sir George Etherege, who in 1664 brought forward *The Comical Revenge; or, Love in a Tub,* a kind of tragi-comedy, and followed that with *She wou'd if she cou'd* (1668), and *The Man of Mode, or, S^r Fopling Flutter* (1676). The first of these may be regarded as an

experimental effort. In style it is somewhat similar to Dryden's *Secret Love*, many of the scenes being written in rimed couplets. With his second and third plays, however, Etherege moved boldly into the world he had created and established as his own. Both deal with real types of the Restoration period, the ideal of the age being set forth in the fine gentlemen and witty ladies, and satire entering in at contemporary follies such as are depicted in the person of Sir Fopling Flutter. Etherege's comedy is, according to modern standards, unquestionably immoral, and even Addison in the age of Queen Anne saw fit to castigate him for sundry lapses into indecency. On the other hand, it is a comedy of almost perfect artistry, and that artistry takes away from much of its evil tone. Etherege has not the *finesse* of Congreve; his style is harder and possesses greater strength; but in his own way he is Congreve's peer. If the one has greater brilliance of dialogue and a more variegated fancy, the other has a greater variety of incidents and a surer touch in realistic portraiture.

The new form of comedy, after Etherege, was not adopted by any individual writer until the appearance of William Wycherley, although by the seventies of the century many other authors were displaying in isolated scenes and characters the impress of the Etheregian style. Wycherley's plays are four in number, *Love in a Wood, or, St James's Park* (1671; printed 1672), *The Gentleman Dancing-Master* (1672; printed 1673), *The Country-Wife* (1675), and *The Plain-Dealer* (1676; printed 1677). Of these four the first three are intimately related together as displaying features distinct from others shown in *The Plain-Dealer*. These first three are all almost entirely in the Etherege style, dealing with a world of fops and fools and gallants, revelling in the none too honest intrigues of the time and packed, as in the notorious 'China' scene in *The Country-Wife*, with innuendos. There can be no question but that Wycherley is indescribably vulgar, particularly when his scenes are translated to the stage. As reading plays they may not seem to have such a confirmed immoral tone as those of Etherege, but seen in the theatre their inherent

vulgarity is fully brought out.[1] There is not in these plays the airy wit of Etheregc, but in place thereof we meet with the masterly hand of a true playwright. All of Wycherley's comedies are excellently constructed, and his portraiture is subtle and delicate. There is a sure touch in his treatment of character and of scene which shows him to have had a true *flair* for the theatre.

As important documents in the history of drama, however, these three early plays fade into insignificance when set beside *The Plain-Dealer.* Here Wycherley separates himself from the regular course of the comedy of manners, for inherently he had not the airy, care-free spirit of its other exponents. A Puritan with the veneer of a Restoration gentleman he has been called, and the phrase seems accurately to indicate his general position in life. He adopted the current modes of contemporary society, but at moments the native self asserted itself in him, and he attacked those vices which he himself had displayed before in comic wise. The first three plays are not, as has often been made out, prevailingly satiric. If Wycherley shows vice in them he shows it for the purpose of raising laughter. *The Plain-Dealer,* on the other hand, is not mainly comic in spirit; its chief note is that of bitter and often indignant satire. Its atmosphere is that of the Puritan rather than that of the Restoration gentleman. Manly, the hero, is a portrait of strength designed in opposition to the weakened, degenerate, and often effeminate figures of the age. With *The Plain-Dealer* Wycherley secured his greatest triumph. The Restoration audiences did not shrink from satire; possibly they regarded it in the light of another thrill wherewith to amuse themselves still further. Wycherley accordingly was universally acclaimed even by those who through their own actions were among the most debauched companions of the dissolute Charles.

[1] I take the opportunity here of correcting an impression of *The Country-Wife* given in *A History of Restoration Drama* (p 226). The recent production of that play by the Phœnix Society has caused me to reverse the judgment there given concerning the intellectualism of the work. Horner is a character who may be a facetious companion in the study, but certainly he makes an unpleasant figure upon the stage.

Wycherley, said these men, had been sent to lash the crying age; but the old intrigues, the old excesses, proceeded merrily along, unimpeded by the dramatist's suddenly awakened horror.

If Wycherley marks a certain breakaway from the typical manners comedy as established by Etherege, William Congreve takes it back once more to its original paths. Congreve has nothing of Wycherley's puritanical temper, and he has less of the fundamental strength of Etherege's manner; his whole power is centred on an airiness of fancy and a delicacy of pointed style, not necessarily so dramatic as the style of his two predecessors, but eminently adapted to the expression of the conventional conversation of the fine society of his time. Four plays in all keep his name alive: *The Old Batchelour* (1693), *The Double Dealer* (1693; printed 1694), *Love for Love* (1695), and *The Way of the World* (1700). Of these *The Double Dealer* is almost a tragicomedy, and does not possess the rich sparkle of the other three. With *The Old Batchelor*, however, a new note was struck, not completely an innovation, certainly, for it is but the atmosphere of Etherege transformed—something finer, more delicate, more scintillating than anything that had gone before. Many of the characters may be little else than humours, but that cannot blind us to the perfection of the prose dialogue and to the sheer brilliance of the scenes. There is not much skill in construction, but no one had ever produced such a comedy replete with all the raciness of cultured, easy, debonair conversation. The literary success of *The Old Batchelor* was surpassed in Congreve's third play, *Love for Love*, with which the seceded actors under Betterton opened at the theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields. In some ways *Love for Love* is his best comedy. There is in it a deliberately developed plot; the plot moves forward with a certainty which shows that its author had clear in his mind from the start the action of his work. The characters, too, are excellently delineated. Ben is a realistic study, and so is Miss Prue; Mrs Frail and Mrs Foresight are subtly differentiated. At the same time, the comedy as a whole appears to lack

any centralized purpose. At one moment we are in the world of artificiality, where social convention rules all, and manners reign; at another we are faced with reality, reality which impresses us as being more crass and sometimes brutal because of the artificial world with which it is mingled. While, therefore, the plot of *Love for Love* is Congreve's triumph, while some of the characters are his best drawn, while, even, a few of the isolated *bons mots* are among the finest and rarest expressions of his almost unique genius, the comedy as a whole fails when placed in juxtaposition to *The Way of the World*. In *The Way of the World* there is no false note. Millamant sails gloriously through it all, affected and fascinating; servants, fools, lovers, wits, all seem to take from her something of that air of modish triviality which belongs to the best scenes of the comedy of manners. We may condemn the realism of some of the character-portraits in this play; we may say that the plot is no plot, only a mere series of often impossible incidents designed simply to afford the author opportunity for uttering his streams of conceited metaphors and bewildering flights of intellectual fancy; but that can never prevent us from acknowledging *The Way of the World* as the most perfect example in English of a certain type of comic endeavour

This was to be Congreve's last effort in the realm of comedy, and already there were gathering round him forces which were ultimately to destroy the fine fabric of this particular type. In 1698 Jeremy Collier startled actors, authors, and audiences with his *Short View of the Immorality and Prophaneness of the English Stage*, a work which was destined to lead to a long pamphlet controversy between those who upheld the licence of the Restoration drama and those who for moral or religious reasons desired to reform or overthrow the stage. In many ways the attack was well founded, even although Collier's arguments verge often upon the ridiculous; the truth that underlay his attack is made nowhere more apparent than in the replies of the poets arraigned at the bar of Nonconformist justice. Dryden, who had been specially singled out, magnanimously,

as was his way, confessed his errors, and without whining for mercy expressed his sorrow that pen of his had been guilty of errors he fully appreciated; others, not willing to acknowledge faults in their writings, scribbled hasty replies, but had nothing better to urge than the sect to which Collier belonged and the trivialities of some of his arguments. His main contentions were allowed for the most part to remain unchallenged. This fierce diatribe of a misoscenic Nonconformist minister would in all probability have remained unnoticed—would have hung heavy on the bookseller's hands—had it not come at a critical moment. In a later chapter attention will be called to the incipient sentimentalism of the late seventeenth century, and that incipient sentimentalism expressed in the drama of the time but corresponds to a general movement in the social life of upper-class circles. James II, with his Catholic propensities, was driven from the throne, and William had come to England with none of the great love of pleasure which had characterized Charles II. At least, if he indulged in pleasure he threw over it a cloak of decency and substituted hypocrisy for frankness. Whether his example was followed by the public at large or not, the truth remains that after the decease of Charles a certain outward veneer of morality covered the excesses of society. Men's tongues became more circumspect, if their thoughts remained the same, and affected blushes took the place of the blunt sophistication of the ladies of previous days. Add to these facts that the middle classes, always with the remnants of Puritanism clinging about them, were assuming an ever greater part in the life of the age, their wealth conquering the erstwhile supercilious disdain of the aristocracy, and we must plainly see that a new age was being born.

Everything conspired together, and the comedy of manners, licentious, vain, worldly, found itself attacked on all sides. The days of Congreve, the days of thoughtless, brilliant, careless wit, were over, and the old free grace was never completely to be recaptured. For a time the typical form of Restoration comedy strove to retain some-

thing of the old abandon, but it soon flickered out, its light completely dimmed by the rising radiance of sentimentalism, good and bad.

Among those who aided in keeping alive something of the spirit of the Congrevian comedy were George Farquhar and Sir John Vanbrugh, men whose careers stretched from a period contemporaneous with the Collier attack on to the middle of the reign of Queen Anne. Farquhar's first play, *Love and a Bottle*, was produced in 1699, his last, *The Beaux Stratagem*, in 1707; Vanbrugh's *The Relapse: or, Virtue in Danger* appeared in 1696, his last farces in the early years of the eighteenth century. The careers of both these men are alike, and, taken together, they prove the general trend of theatrical tastes. Both commenced in the seventeenth century with largely immoral comedies, full of wit and striving to capture the fine grace that had distinguished the Stuart Court; both, as they progressed, showed with frequent touches of satire and cynicism a descent to farce and sentimentalism. Not that the two had precisely similar natures. Farquhar is at one and the same time nearer to the spirit of Congreve and more foppish than Vanbrugh. He has, in *The Constant Couple* (1699), in *The Inconstant* (1702), and in *The Beaux' Stratagem*, caught something of the true manners style. His plots are more carefully elaborated than are those of Congreve, but he retains at least a reflection of the Congreve wit. In *The Twin Rivals* (1702) and in *The Recruiting Officer* (1706), on the other hand, he displays clearly the impress of the newer age. The first is deeply tinged with a hypocritical sentimentalism, and the second has a realistic touch quite alien to the comedy of manners. Vanbrugh is much more robust than Farquhar, but that robustness removes him from the ranks of Congreve and leads him to draw comedy down from the high levels it had held to the lower depths of farce. More than any other of the playwrights mentioned in this chapter he relies upon action for comic effect. The plots of his comedies are designed not, as Congreve's were, for the expression of fancies of the mind, but for the elaboration of comic situations independent of the dialogue of

the play. This tendency in his art is not so noticeable in his early works, *The Relapse*, *The Provok'd Wife* (1697), and *Æsop* (1696–7), nor is it especially apparent in *The Confederacy* (1705) or in *The Mistake* (1705), but it is abundantly evident in *Squire Trelooby*, a farce executed by Vanbrugh, Congreve, and Walsh out of Molière's *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac*, and in *The Country House* (1704), another farce taken from Dancourt. Like Farquhar, also, Vanbrugh turned to a type of sentimentalism, evidently insincere, in *The False Friend* (1702). The truth is that men of Farquhar's and Vanbrugh's calibre did not know where to stand. They had lost freedom of action in the conflicting moods of the time. Spectators, perhaps, were just as pleasure-loving as they had been in the days of Charles II, but there were now societies for the reformation of manners, and statutes against oaths, and other dreadful things to be feared. The efforts in the older style were, therefore, bound to be only half-hearted, or, if indulged in boldly, were sure to be followed by a succeeding moment of painful reflection. The Restoration drama may be immoral and vulgar, but it possesses the divine gift of laughter, and that gift, because of the rising sentimental and moral movement, was destined for many years to disappear in favour of impossible disquisitions on human virtue, artificial sentimentalizings, and inordinate scenes of pathos and pity.

PART IV

DRAMA IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

CHAPTER I

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE AUDIENCE

FUNDAMENTALLY the theatres and the stage methods in the eighteenth century were the same as those employed in the later Restoration period. Some innovations here and there may be discerned—new methods of staging, new lighting effects—but such in no wise call for detailed attention here. The only alteration which may perhaps demand passing mention is the tendency after the middle of the century to erect theatres of increasing capacity. This tendency, it is true, had been started far back in the midst of the reign of Charles II with the building of the massive Dorset Garden playhouse, and was continued by Vanbrugh in his ill-designed theatre in the Haymarket, but in those early years this was countered by two facts. The first is that such theatres did not suit the purpose for which they were built; instead of bringing in more money to the patentees or managers (as from their additional seating accommodation was expected) they often gathered together barely such an audience as would pay for the music and the candles. The second is that alongside of these larger theatres smaller structures, and structures usually more favoured by the spectators, were continually springing up—the Little Theatre in the Haymarket, the Little Theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields, the *Little Theatre in Goodman's Fields* These smaller theatres kept alive the love of subtle acting and the love of good plays. Here the glorious line of our drama could well be displayed; here Garrick and other actors only less famous made their *débuts*. With the Licensing Act of 1737, however,

these lesser theatres were technically, if not practically, silenced, and the drama became centred in Drury Lane and in Covent Garden. As these underwent their Phœnix-like alterations they grew in size, until a time came when subtle acting was impossible, when the hero and the heroine had to roar to galleries far distant from them, when delicate comedy and awe-inspiring tragedy alike failed to appeal because of the very vastness of the playhouses. This tendency, it is true, affects more largely the early nineteenth-century drama than the drama of the eighteenth century, but the movements which led to it are already apparent in this period, and its evil effects are plainly visible in the last few decades, which synchronize with the seething of romantic sentiment and the outbreak of revolution in France.

More important for our purpose is an examination of the typical audience of the time. It has already been noted that a change was coming over society in the latter years of the seventeenth century, a change which operated disastrously upon the fortunes of the comedy of manners. This change was fully established in the reigns of Anne and the Georges. Anne was not interested in the playhouses; the first of the Georges could not have understood a word had he gone to the theatre; and as a consequence the actors, in search of a patron, turned from the King to the public. No longer were they his Majesty's servants in anything but name. A monarch no longer moved in their ranks, granting them monetary rewards, providing them with raiment, suggesting themes to the dramatists. Performers and playwrights were, therefore, both thrown more upon the caprices of the public than ever they had been since Elizabethan times. The public, however, was not the public which had graced Shakespeare's stage; it was still composed largely of society and its servants. Lackeys filled the upper gallery—until, indeed, they were driven from that airy perch for sundry misdemeanours—ladies of Quality and their gallants flocked to the boxes, and critics and beaux thronged the pit. Yet we are no longer in Restoration times. For all that the

audience seemed unchanged, a great alteration had taken place. Many of the aristocratic families, partly because of excesses in the time of the Merry Monarch, partly because of ill-advised expenditure of money in the troublous days which preceded the succession of Queen Anne, had grown impoverished and no longer hesitated to replenish their coffers by judicious alliances with the wealthier *bourgeoisie*. Tradesmen and aristocrats thus gradually came together, the one seeking distinction of birth, the other financial aid, so that there was no longer the usually strict cleavage which separated the Cavalier and the citizen under the Stuart *régime*. The theatre, as we have seen, was the plaything of society in the late seventeenth century, and now the tradesfolk, proud of their association with the highborn, came to attend this haunt of the People of Quality, possibly adopting most of the fashions and vices of these People of Quality, yet still retaining some of their inherited *bourgeois* and occasionally puritanical tenets and tastes. The union of these two forces led naturally toward a less homogeneous set of predilections than had distinguished the Restoration theatre Society still enjoyed the licence of the comedy of manners; Shadwell, Dryden, Etherege, Wycherley, and Congreve, even Ravenscroft and Tate, were still enjoyed; but the newer elements in the audience also delighted in moralizations, in approaches toward sentimentalism, in scenes of pathos. For many decades the struggle went on silently between the forces of intellectual callousness and those of incipient humanitarianism, destroying, as is the way with such struggles, the free expression of both the one and the other, but by the sixties and the seventies of the century the battle was won, and victory passed to the side of the sentimental movement. The middle classes, without consciously striving toward it, had gained the mastery.

In connexion with the external conditions of the theatre in this period another fact must be noted. The century was a century of great actors. Garrick and Mrs Siddons dominate them all, but beside those two are many only less gifted with genius than they. In this the eighteenth

century was not strikingly different from the latter part of the seventeenth, when Betterton and Mrs Barry, Mohun and Kynaston, Hart and Nell Gwyn, each laid his or her impress upon the drama of the age; but if we are to take it all in all the Augustan period is richer in this way than that which went before. The result is seen in the plays written for these actors and actresses. The heavy style of performance which characterized the stage previous to the Garrick era eminently fitted the Booths and Barrys of the time to interpret the equally heavy pseudo-classical tragedy; the airy modishness of a Mrs Oldfield was excellently fitted to express the tones of the 'genteel' comedy; Garrick's powers passed off on his audiences many a dull tragedy and duller comedy, even if at times they inspired a dramatist of talent to write something for him of true value. We can find only praise for the actors on account of their histrionic talents, but we may now censure them for their lack of discrimination and for their love of the effective part rather than of the artistic drama as a whole.

CHAPTER II

PSEUDO-CLASSIC AND PATHETIC TRAGEDY

FUNDAMENTALLY, of course, there is no direct break between the Restoration and the Augustan periods. The one merges imperceptibly into the other, and no strict lines of demarcation are anywhere discoverable. At the same time, society and tastes were changing, and the year 1700 forms as convenient a point from which to trace the alteration as any. In the realm of tragedy the eighteenth century inherited three or four traditions—that which may be styled heroic, that which [illegible]

the weakest. All the more chill pseudo-classical dramas written and produced before 1700 were unsuccessful; audiences still admired the bombast of Dryden, the pathos of Otway, the natural warmth of the Shakespearian style. With [illegible] theor[illegible] Pope [illegible] and [illegible] aided in establishing firmly that strict set of laws which bound poetry for well over half a century and which still exercised its influence in the days of Byron According to these rules imitation of the 'Ancients' was the best that a modern author could do. His plays must be irreproachable as regards the three unities of time, place, and action. He must not permit more than a certain number of characters to appear in his work. He must, above all endeavour always to secure decency, propriety, order, and common sense. Intellectual precision rather than

passionate rhapsody must be aimed at. These rules dominated almost all the poetic and dramatic activity of the reigns of Anne and the early Georges, but dominated it as a force from without. Some writers may have found the pseudo-classic theory well to their tastes, but the spectators looked for something more inspiring, something more bombastic, than they could discover in the chill of the classical tragedy. We find, therefore, in this period a constant struggle proceeding between the pseudo-classicists and those who preferred other styles. The heroic tragedy still exercised its charm for the audience; imitations of Shakespeare are constantly making their appearance; Otway ruled over a large body of dramatists and of spectators. The lack of a central purpose, however, told heavily on the fortunes of the stage. Few playwrights seemed to know their own aims, and the majority compromised by observing the unities, filling their plays with pathos, and adding a seasoning of heroic ardour and of Shakespearian reminiscence. The result, as might be imagined, is a mass of uninteresting dramas unrelieved by any true features or marks of genius.

It was not for want of courage or for want of patience that the pseudo-classicists failed to reform entirely the tastes of their age. Again and again they returned to the attack, but few were successful in their endeavours. In the early years of the century Dennis and Gildon made serious attempts to enlist favour on their side, and failed; so did Dr Johnson in his *Irene* (1749), and managed to secure some small applause for his effort only through the good services of his erstwhile pupil, David Garrick. Barely three or four of these dramas were popular, and all lack true interest and tragic fervour. The first which definitely established itself upon the stage was *The Distrest Mother* (1712), written by Ambrose Philips, Pope's rival in pastoral poetry. This play was an adaptation from Racine, and contains not only some striking lines, but also two well-drawn characters. It is, however, an alien growth; nothing of Elizabethan fire breathes in it, and the chill which enwraps its dialogue owes its misplaced dignity to France.

Scene in Addison's "Cato"

The year following the appearance of *The Distrest Mother* Joseph Addison, already placed in his niche of fame, brought out at Drury Lane his famous *Cato*, a play which was at once accepted as a masterpiece by his friends and pseudo-classic followers. Its initial success was due partly to political enthusiasm, but its own merits established it as a stock play. We may confess that the enthusiasm meted out to *Cato* was not ill placed. If any pseudo-classic tragedy deserved the title of great, certainly *Cato* deserved it. What could be done in this style Addison has done; and our only legitimate criticism may be directed to the limitations of the style. Instead of foolishly making a [illegible]

[illegible]

his age had seemed permissible which did not keep a loving hero and a faithful heroine always in the midst of the action, and the follies resultant upon an unimpassioned treatment of would-be majestic passion brought almost all these plays down to the level of the ridiculous. Addison alone dared to come forward with a theme eminently suited to the restricted medium in which he worked.

Many followed the author of *The Spectator* in choosing subject-matter from classical legend or history, but few realized the reason of his success. All filled their dramas with love, introducing weeping Andromaches and dismal Hecubas. In the middle of the century it seemed for a moment as if this style was to receive a fresh impetus when James Thomson, author of *The Seasons*, turned to the tragic stage. His *Sophonisba* appeared in 1730, and was followed by *Agamemnon* (1738), *Edward and Eleanora* (printed 1739), *Tancred and Sigismunda* (1745), and *Coriolanus* (1749). Three of these plays, it will be noted, had classical themes, and all three are treated in the pseudo-classic manner. In the first Thomson, probably

realizing, as Addison did, the requirements of his styl turned Sophonisba from a lover into a patriot. Ho associations with her adorers are dominated entirely by her desire to benefit her native land, and there is as a consequence decidedly less of the amatory sentiment than in other plays of the time. *Agamemnon* follows a similar plan, and achieves a certain dignity from the portrait of the title-*rôle*. *Coriolanus* is less interesting, and displays lamentably Thomson's weakness when contrasted with the majestic passion of Shakespeare. The two romantically themed plays call now for our attention. Both are dealt with in the ordinary pseudo-classic manner, but both treat of subjects which are startlingly different from the typical themes of other classical plays. It is possible here that we can trace the dissatisfaction of the poet at his own chosen *métier*. The author of *The Seasons* is now acclaimed as on of the forerunners of the romantic movement, and here ir the theatre he shows himself, if half-heartedly, animated by themes taken from the dim 'Gothic' Middle Ages.

After the middle of the eighteenth century the pseudo-classic tragedy dragged along miserably enough. No one masterpiece of this style during those years may be dis-covered, and soon the type was to be overwhelmed by the onrush of spectacular melodrama more suited, because of its flagrant rant, to the tastes of a people already feeling that stirring of revolutionary sentiment which produced here a Wordsworth and a Shelley, and in France a Robespierre and a Napoleon.

With the pseudo-classic tragedy, however, moved the eroic and pathetic types. Heroism dominated a great art of the ordinary tragic fare of the period. Even Gildon, seudo-classicist as he was, could strive to emulate Dryden his most bombastic flights. No one, on the other hand, ote a really good heroic play in this period. Dr Joseph app's *Abra-Mule: Or, Love and Empire* (1704) perhaps erves some praise, but the characters are hopelessly eotyped, and the language rarely rises above mediocrity. jamin Martyn's *Timoleon* (1730) has likewise a certain ngth, and David Mallet's *Eurydice* (1731) and *Mustapha*

(1739) merit some praise for occasional scenes. The type is common, but because of its uninspired character cannot be given here anything but a passing mention. It were mere waste of space in a book of this kind to attempt an analysis of plays which were, after all, merely ephemeral and which now can charm no more.

The pathetic school, on the contrary, has a certain interest,

predecessor of George Lillo. Rowe's plays may betray features which link them with the heroic dramas of his own time and earlier; occasionally may be traced in them elements plainly derived from pseudo-classic theory; but fundamentally they belong to the type where pity is what the dramatist most seeks to evoke from the breasts of his hearers. Rowe's very first play, *The Ambitious Step-Mother* (1700; printed 1701), proves the author's predilections. In it Otway is praised and followed, and there is even a bold attempt, in order to secure greater pathos, to throw off the trammels of the pseudo-classic rule of Poetic Justice. This tragedy, which itself is not notable for any great excellence, was followed by *Tamerlane* (1701; printed 1702), a more heroic work, but in his third play, *The Fair Penitent* (1703), he found his true utterance. This tragedy, together with *The Tragedy of Jane Shore* (1714) and *The Tragedy of Lady Jane Grey* (1715), fully established Rowe at the head of Augustan dramatists. Each is a

Fatal Dowry, and already Banks had dealt with English historical themes in a very similar way. To Rowe, however, must be given the credit of having popularized the species.

tuations, by his gift for

rful blank verse, by his

the minds and hearts of

his contemporaries. His tragedies are not great, lacking as they do a central aim and homogeneity of tone, but they are among the best tragedies written for over fifty or sixty years.

The selection of English historical themes gave an impetus to a species of drama, sometimes with Shakespearian echoes, but based fundamentally upon Otway, in the succeeding years. Mrs Haywood attempted a tragedy on the subject of *Frederick, Duke of Brunswick-Lunenburgh* (1729), and Ambrose Philips wrote *The Briton* (1722) and *Humfrey, Duke of Gloucester* (1723) on early English themes; so another writer, Captain William Phillips, turned to Irish history in *Hibernia Freed* (1722), and Smollett to Scots history in *The Regicide* (1749). Aaron Hill followed the fashion in *Elfrid: or the Fair Inconstant* (1710) and in *King Henry the Fifth. Or, The Conquest of France by the English* (1723), as did Henry Brooke in *Gustavus Vasa* (1739), William Havard in *King Charles the First* (1737), William Shirley in *Edward the Black Prince: or, The Battle of Poictiers* (1750), and John St John in *Mary Queen of Scots* (1789). It is possible that in choosing these subjects the dramatists were actuated by a number of diverse motives. The age was more patriotic than had been that of the Restoration, and these historical themes fired men's imaginations. The pseudo-classicists, too, had decided that it was better to dramatize actual fact than to attempt the weaving of a fictitious tale, so that in one way the playwrights were placating the critics. Shakespeare, who was now rising into renewed fame, came to be respected for his series of chronicle histories and seemed to unite with Banks and Rowe in favouring the species. Everything conspired to make this a popular type, and audiences liked it because it usually demanded in treatment an amount of bustle and action prohibited to the pseudo-classic muse. Not any of these playwrights were masters in the sphere of tragedy, but each displays certain features which prove that this type aided in keeping alive something of true tragic spirit at a time when the pseudo-classicists were endeavouring by every means in their power to destroy the very being of tragedy.

CHAPTER III

THE BALLAD-OPERA AND PANTOMIME

THE spectacular and operatic tendencies in the Restoration period have already been briefly noted, and a glance has been cast at the development of the Italian opera in the eighteenth century itself. This spectacular and operatic movement may seem somewhat at variance with the chastening influences dealt with summarily in the preceding chapter; but it is to be interpreted as the expression of popular taste moving against the restrictions of the severer among the poets and critics. The men and [illegible] 'iked show; music appealed [illegible] listening in bored silence [illegible] eavier tragedy they flocked for recreation to the opera, or applauded vigorously the singers, instrumentalists, and dancers who gave *intermezzi* before and after, and occasionally in the midst of, regular performances in the theatres To appreciate aright the theatrical movements of the age the opera must be intimately related to the chiller forms of tragedy, and out of the two a picture of the period must be wrought.

Four popular species of entertainment must here be noted—the operatic, the spectacular, the terpsichorean, and the mimic. The first two have already been analysed; only the latter two require comment. From the earliest Restoration days (and even in Elizabethan times) dancing formed a popular part of dramatic performances Many plays ended with a dance, and we know how such a performer as Moll Davis charmed her public. To satisfy the craving for these dances theatrical managers in the late seventeenth century called in the services of dancing-masters from Paris, and these dancing-masters soon became a recognized feature of the theatres. We learn the names of many of them from the newspaper advertisements of the early

eighteenth century, and we note, from the prominence given to them there, what a position they occupied in the minds of the spectators. At first their performances were limited to the ordinary dances of the Court or of the country, but soon came in the taste for mimic dancing, where a story was told silently by means of expressive movements. It is here we reach the beginnings of the pantomime; but the pantomime proper was based, not only on the dance, but on the *commedia dell'arte.* For many seasons during the first half of the eighteenth century French and Italian companies performed in London, drawing to their little theatre fashionable or would-be fashionable crowds. The *répertoires* of these companies consisted of an admixture of classical pieces and of lighter forms of drama. Many of the latter were harlequinades, introducing the recognized characters of the Italian improvised comedy. These characters soon occupied the attention of the audiences, and it is not surprising to find that the managers attempted to counter their rivals by introducing a form of entertainment well calculated to prove attractive. This form of entertainment was the pantomime. In its typical eighteenth-century shape the pantomime presented a union of diverse forces. In the first place, there was usually a serious legendary story told by means of dancing and songs—in fact a short opera on a usual operatic theme. In these plots moved the figures of the *commedia dell'arte,* burlesquing in silent movement the action of the more serious tale. All of this was laid upon a background of the most spectacular description, with the lavish use of 'machinery' and countless changes of scene to please the ravished spectators. It was impossible but that the pantomime, thus wrought out of all the audience held most dear, should prove popular. The two licensed theatres vied with one another in these shows, and soon they drifted to the lesser playhouses at Goodman's Fields and the Haymarket, and settled down comfortably at the various 'Wells.'

These pantomimes did not by any means drive legitimate drama from the stage, for they were, for the most part, performed along with, not instead of, the regular comedies

and tragedies; but they had several serious effects upon the theatrical history of the period. In the first place, they aided in helping forward the disintegration of true dramatic taste; unquestionably they lowered the general power of appreciation on the part of the audience. Secondly, they established fully the reign of the afterpiece. The afterpiece, as we have noted, was inaugurated in England with the appearance of Otway's *The Cheats of Scapin*, and in the first years of the eighteenth century it was fairly common for a tragedy or a comedy to be given along with a one-act farce. Still, the appearance of these farces was only sporadic; they were not rendered necessary appendages to the ordinary plays. With the success of the pantomime, however, the public came to demand some light refreshment when the heavier meal of tragedy or sentimental comedy was over, and, if a pantomime was not shown, some short ballad-opera or farce was positively called for. There seemed nothing extraordinary to the audience in their listening to Lear's agony at 7.30 and laughing hilariously at pantomime or farcical afterpiece at 8. But there was a further result. The pantomime not only aided in the degeneration of taste and in the establishment of the afterpiece, but it led dramatists who might otherwise have contributed serious work to the theatre to indulge in the lesser forms of dramatic endeavour. A one-act farce paid better than a full-length tragedy; the trivial words for an operatic pantomime were well rewarded. Farce, then, comes to occupy the minds of the playwrights, and many men, such as Lewis Theobald, editor of Shakespeare and capable scholar, turned to pen the foolish ditties which pleased the spectators in the pantomimic displays.

The reign of pantomime is ultimately associated with the reign of the ballad-opera, and that there is an intimate relationship between the two has been demonstrated above. In origin the ballad-opera—or ballad-farce, as it was frequently called—was at once a burlesque and a rival of the Italian opera. It was aimed in the first place to capture some of the attention paid to the Italian type, but it employed for effect many satirical attacks upon the

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follies that were inherent in that form. Nor would the ballad-opera itself have come into being had not the ground been prepared by the other musical enthusiasts. Men now loved to hear a story sung, and they were delighted when they heard their favourite ditties as well as airs from popular Italian operas provided with new and witty words and all run together into a plot which (being told in English) they could understand and (being comic) they could enjoy.

As is well known, the ballad-opera was invented by John Gay, whose *The Beggar's Opera* (1728) was the first of a long line of similar works stretching down to comparatively recent times. *The Beggar's Opera* at once intrigued the whole of London playgoers. The political references amused those many men and women tired of the chicanery of the Walpole *régime*; the gallant highwayman Macheath, the pathetic Polly, the farcical array of the hero's innumerable wives, the artificiality and fancy and novel daring of it, all ensured it what few innovations receive—an immediate popularity. All the town flocked to the little theatre in which it was performed; it was taken thence to the patent houses and to the booths; travelled from there through all the provinces; and even crept over to the Continent, where its half-concealed revolutionary tone secured it a hearing. Although Gay himself had not previously tried anything in the style of the operatic farce, he had made approaches toward the type in his "tragi-comical farce" *The Mohocks* (printed 1712), a satirical piece, and in the peculiar play entitled *The What D'ye Call It* (1715), a work which approaches the sentimental in some portions and the intellectually satirical in others. The ballad-opera, however, far exceeded these in popularity and was at once imitated by others. Its author, eager, no doubt, to make even more money than had come to him from his first success, hurriedly prepared a sequel in *Polly* (printed 1729). The authorities were by now on the look-out. They had not dared to stifle the successful *Beggar's Opera*, but they saw, or they pretended to see, mighty signs of revolutionary ardour in the sequel. *Polly* was accordingly prohibited the stage, and was performed

for the first time many years later, under Colman's management, in 1777. *Polly* is not nearly so fine as the first piece; it has a realistic touch lacking in the earlier play, which was so purely fanciful and wayward; the savages, too, strike a false note, and, although interesting enough as showing the Rousseauesque tendencies of the writer, aid in spoiling the work as a whole. After this set-back Gay attempted only one other play in the like style, *Achilles* (1733), which departs from the bantering political satire of *The Beggar's Opera* to burlesque a classical story. Its humour is not great, and it proved a failure on the stage.

It is impossible here even to enumerate a moiety of the many ballad-operas produced between 1728 and the middle of the century. One after another they were rushed forward by authors eager to rival Gay in his newly won popularity and affluence, many of them meeting a well-merited fate at the hands of critical audiences. Of all the authors who adopted the style Henry Fielding is the one who calls for most detailed attention This *littérateur*, anxious to earn money, had produced his first play, *Love in Several Masques* (1728), contemporaneously with Gay's successful opera, and it may have been partly the triumph of that satirical work which led him in 1730 to bring forward his burlesque tragedy *Tom Thumb*, later reworked and renamed *The Tragedy of Tragedies.* This piece follows the lines laid down in *The Rehearsal.* It attacks contemporary tragic follies, endeavouring to display the weakness of invention, the staleness of language, the stereotyped characters which marred the tragedy of the age. Along with *The Rehearsal* and Sheridan's *The Critic* this stands out as one of the best burlesques in English, the styles of the various authors being aptly ridiculed and the wit being in Fielding's finest satirical vein. While it has nothing to do directly with the ballad-opera, it may not be unfitting here to indicate briefly the scope of this burlesque movement in the eighteenth century. Fielding himself, inspired partly by the success of *Tom Thumb*, partly by his own satirical qualities, tried the form several times before the close of his dramatic career. *The Covent-Garden Tragedy*

(1732) is in the same style, as are *Pasquin* (1736), *Tumble-Down Dick: or, Phæton in the Suds* (1736), and *The Historical Register, For the Year 1736* (1737). None of these save *Pasquin* possesses the wit that is apparent in his first burlesque, but each shows Fielding's abundant sense of the follies and evils of his time. The following quotation from the last-mentioned play illustrates well the author's view of those "entertainments" which have occupied our attention immediately above. Sneerwell, the critic, is discussing with Fustian, the tragic poet, the parts of the latter's play. Says Fustian, watching his battle upon the stage:

There, there, pretty well; I think, Mr *Sneerwell*, we have made a shift to make out a good sort of a Battle at last.

Sneer. Indeed I cannot say I ever saw a better.—

Fust. You don't seem, Mr *Sneerwell*, to relish this Battle greatly.

Sneer. I cannot profess my self the greatest Admirer of this part of Tragedy; and I own my Imagination can better conceive the Idea of a Battle from a skilful Relation of it, than from such a Representation; for my Mind is not able to enlarge the Stage into a vast Plain, nor multiply half a Score into several Thousands.

Fust. Oh! your humble Servant; but if we write to please you, and half a dozen others, who will pay the Charges of the House? Sir, if the Audience will be contented with a Battle or two, instead of all the Raree-fine Shows exhibited to them in what they call Entertainments.

Sneer. Pray, Mr *Fustian*, how came they to give the Name of Entertainments to their Pantomimical Farces?

Fust. Faith, Sir, out of their peculiar Modesty; intimating that after the Audience have been tired with the dull Works of *Shakespear*, *Johnson*, *Vanbrugh*, and others, they are to be entertain'd with one of these *Pantomimes*, of which the Master of the *Play-House*, two or three Painters, and half a Score Dancing-Masters are the Compilers: What these Entertainments are, I need not inform you who have seen 'em; but I have often wond'red how it was possible for any Creature of human Understanding, after having been diverted for three Hours with the Productions of a great Genius, to sit for three more, and see a Set of People running about the Stage after one another, without speaking one Syllable, and playing several Juggling Tricks, which are done at *Fawks's* after a much better manner; and for this, Sir, the Town does not only pay additional Prices, but lose several fine Parts of their best Authors, which are cut out to make room for the said Farces.

Sneer. It's very true, and I have heard a hundred say the same thing, who never fail'd being present at them

[illegible]

the meaning of this? You have left out a Scene; was ever such an Absurdity, as for your Ghost to appear before you are kill'd.

Ghost. I ask Pardon, Sir, in the Hurry of the Battle I forgot to come and kill my self.

Fust. Well, let me wipe the Flower[1] off your Face then; and now if you please Rehearse the Scene; take care you don't make this Mistake any more tho'; for it would inevitably damn the Play, if you should Go to the Corner of the Scene, and come in as if you had lost the Battle

Q C.S.[2] Behold the Ghost of *Common-Sense* appears.

Fust. 'Sdeath, Madam, I tell you you are no Ghost,
You are not kill'd.

Q.C.S. Deserted and forlorn, where shall I fly?
The Battle's lost, and so are all my Friends.

Enter a Poet.

Poet. Madam, not so, still have you one Friend left.

Q.C.S. Why, what art thou?

Poet. Madam, I am a Poet.

Q.C.S. Whoe'er thou art, if thou'rt a Friend to Misery,
Know *Common-Sense* disclaims thee.

Poet. I have been damn'd
Because I was your Foe, and yet I still
Courted your Friendship with my utmost Art.

Q.C.S. Fool, thou wert damn'd because thou didst pretend
Thy self my Friend; for hadst thou boldly dar'd,
Like *Hurlothrombo*,[3] to deny me quite;
Or like an Opera or Pantomime,
Profest the Cause of Ignorance in publick,
Thou might'st have met with thy desir'd Success;
But Men can't bear even a Pretence to Me

Poet Then take a Ticket for my Benefit Night.

Q.C.S. I will do more, for *Common-Sense* will stay
Quite from your House, so may you not be damn'd.

Poet. Ha! Say'st thou? By my Soul a better Play
Ne'er came upon a Stage; but since you dare
Contemn me thus, I'll dedicate my Play
To *Ignorance*, and call her *Common-Sense*:
Yes, I will dress her in your Pomp, and swear
That *Ignorance* knows more than all the World.

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[1] flour. [2] Queen Common Sense.
[3] A fantastic piece by Samuel Johnson of Cheshire.

No better commentary than this could be found on the typical theatrical affairs of the time, for, deeply satirical as it is, it bears behind it the weight of truth.

The burlesque form, partly because of Fielding's own endeavours, proved highly popular in the middle of the eighteenth century, but few of the pieces rise above mediocrity. One of the best of the early examples is Henry Carey's *The Tragedy of Chrononhotonthologos: Being the most Tragical Tragedy, that ever was Tragediz'd by any Company of Tragedians* (1734) with its famous first lines:

SCENE, *An Antichamber in the Palace.*

Enter RIGDUM-FUNNIDOS, *and* ALDIBORONTIPHOSCOPHORNIO.

Rigdum-Funnidos. Aldiborontiphoscophornio!
Where left you *Chrononhotonthologos*?

This, however, is a short piece, and indulges not in witty satire, but in burlesque exaggeration. Much finer is R. B. Sheridan's *The Critic or A Tragedy Rehearsed* (1781), which contains the well-known character of Puff, who has reduced the gentle art of advertisement to regular rule and scientific method. To Sneer, who questions him on the point, he cries:

O lud, Sir! you are very ignorant, I am afraid.—Yes Sir,—PUFFING is of various sorts—the principal are, The PUFF DIRECT—the PUFF PRELIMINARY—the PUFF COLLATERAL—the PUFF COLLUSIVE, and the PUFF OBLIQUE, or PUFF by IMPLICATION.—These all assume, as circumstances require, the various forms of LETTER TO THE EDITOR—OCCASIONAL ANECDOTE—IMPARTIAL CRITIQUE—OBSERVATION FROM CORRESPONDENT,—or ADVERTISEMENT FROM THE PARTY.

Sneer. The puff direct, I can conceive——

Puff. O yes, that's simple enough,—for instance—A new Comedy or Farce is to be produced at one of the Theatres (though by the bye they don't bring out half what they ought to do). The author, suppose Mr Smatter, or Mr Dapper—or any particular friend of mine—very well; the day before it is to be performed, I write an account of the manner in which it was received—I have the plot from the author,—and only add—Characters strongly drawn—highly coloured—hand of a master—fund of genuine humour—mine of invention—neat dialogue—attic salt! Then for the performance—Mr DODD was astonishingly great in the character of SIR HARRY! That universal and

judicious actor, Mr PALMER, perhaps never appeared to more advantage than in the COLONEL;—but it is not in the power of language to do justice to Mr KING!—Indeed he more than merited those repeated bursts of applause which he drew from a most brilliant and judicious audience! As to the scenery—The miraculous power of Mr DE LOUTHERBOURG's pencil are universally acknowledged!—In short, we are at a loss which to admire most,—the unrivalled genius of the author, the great attention and liberality of the managers—the wonderful abilities of the painter, or the incredible exertions of all the performers!——

Sneer. That's pretty well indeed, Sir.

Puff. O cool—quite cool—to what I sometimes do.

It may seem that the quotations from these burlesques have been here too liberal, but in them, and only in them, can we get behind the scenes. They record features we miss in the regular tragedies and comedies; they lay bare the evils, and show the virtues, of the time.

This digression on the burlesques of the period has taken us some distance from the ballad-opera; but the two, because of their common satirical tendencies, are ultimately related the one to the other. In its career the ballad-opera frequently adopted a burlesque tone, as in Henry Carey's *The Dragon of Wantley* (1737) and its sequel, *Margery: or, A Worse Plague than the Dragon* (1738). The ballad-operas, indeed, assumed all the forms of regular non-musical drama; there are burlesques among them, and regular farces, now in the Jonsonian manner, now in the style of intrigue, and there are definitely sentimental works calculated to display the humaneness and virtue of mankind A number of these ballad-operas fully deserve reviving, but the majority are sufficiently trivial, evidently the production of writers eager to run together a work which might bring to their empty pockets a few honest guineas A few, such as Cibber's *Damon and Phillida* (1729) and John Hippisley's *Flora* (1729), proved successful, but none until the appearance of Sheridan's *The Duenna* (1775) rivalled the popularity of Gay's triumph of 1728. *The Duenna*, certainly, from the literary point of view, well deserved its success. The characters are well drawn, especially that of Isaac; the airs are pretty and sometimes distinguished by true

lyric melody; the dialogue rarely falls to dullness and frequently rises to flashes of true wit.

This play of Sheridan's in reality introduces us to a new type of dramatic art, the comic opera,[1] a type fully established by Isaac Bickerstaff, who won a marked success in *The Maid of the Mill* (1765) and in *Lionel and Clarissa* (1768). The comic opera, particularly that which displayed romantic features, was an important factor in the development of early nineteenth-century literature. It was given new life in the delightful fantasies of Gilbert and Sullivan; and still makes its appeal to the adherents of at least one great London theatre.

[1] There is, technically, a distinction between the ballad-opera (with words written to older airs) and the comic opera (with words composed by an individual musician).

CHAPTER IV

THE DECAY OF TRUE COMEDY AND THE GROWTH OF SENTIMENTALISM

The Sentimental Movement

IN dealing with tragedy it was noted that the chief weakness of the age lay in a want of a true orientation. Many dramatists had genuine talent for the stage, but they possessed no definite and conscious purpose in their art. The same precisely may be said for comedy. The manners type, which had produced Etherege, Wycherley, and Congreve, was rapidly degenerating when Farquhar and Vanbrugh took it over. A few other dramatists, such as Charles Burnaby and Mrs Centlivre, tried to keep it alive; but it had lost its original abandon and could never again assume quite the same Cavalier tone it had exhibited in the Restoration age.

Farce was occupying more and more attention; sentimentalism was rapidly growing in strength; pity was creeping into the world of intellectual laughter. It is necessary here, for an understanding of the tendencies of the time, to analyse if but briefly the development of this sentimental movement. Sentiment, as Charlotte Brontë found in *Shirley*, means only thought, idea, or conception; in itself, therefore, sentimentalism is not a quality to be despised; but it is imperative that a distinction should be made between the true and false species of this mood. In its weaker form sentimentalism implies an unmanly pity, a lack of strength, and sometimes a certain puritanical hypocrisy. In these forms it is displayed clearly enough in Mackenzie's *The Man of Feeling* and in Richardson's *Pamela*. But sentimentalism can mean, and did mean, more than this. Steele's hatred of duelling and his belief in matrimonial fidelity were sentimental, but they implied true courage. It was daring for a man in his position, in

the midst of a sneering society, to utter the thoughts he did. Rousseau too is sentimental, but with him sentimentalism denotes humanitarianism, and sometimes revolutionary aims. We may, perhaps, distinguish these three as the main forms of this strange eighteenth-century development. False sentimentalism may be seen in many mawkish works of the time; true sentimentalism implying thought and reflection is well displayed in Steele; the humanitarian sentimentalism, which is a later growth, is reflected in the plays of Mrs Inchbald.

In many different ways sentimentalism exercised an influence, both good and evil, on the comedy of the time. If, on the one hand, it destroyed the possibility of free laughter, untrammelled by any considerations save its own mirth, it opened up fresh tracts for the playwrights, and gave birth to an entirely new type of dramatic work. We may thus regret that there could never appear another Etherege or another Congreve blissfully ignorant of any moral obligations, but we must at the same time recognize that the new humanitarianism, the recognition of social problems, the endeavour to make the theatre express in its own way the many problems which faced men and women, was a good thing, a development which lay at the back of all the best modern dramatic art. It is useless to extol sentimentalism for what it was not, to refuse to see in it often the elements of a false hypocrisy; but it is equally useless to condemn it wholeheartedly as do some who see the theatre only in the light of the comedy of manners.

This sentimental movement may be traced back to the early eighties of the seventeenth century. It is probable that the political interest which centred round the last days of Charles II, the reign of James II, and the Rebellion had something to do with its appearance in the dramatic literature of the time. Men in those years began to think of the problems of government and of religion, and from those they were led naturally to a consideration of the problems of social life. This consideration of life's problems coincided with the development of a reaction to the excesses

of the Stuart Court, and together the two forces moved forward rapidly. Touches of a reflective cast crept into comedies and tragedies; men such as D'Urfey, women such as Mrs Behn, began to introduce into their plays themes which displayed their consciousness of the difficulties that arose out of social conventions. Even Shadwell, a confirmed Jonsonian, felt the impress of the time and gave expression to it in his later productions. Interesting as it is, however, to trace the gradual emergence of this sentimental spirit in the comedy of the late seventeenth century we must recognize that during this period it was purely tentative and experimental. Sufficient strength it had, certainly, to lead Colley Cibber, a dramatist always eager to satisfy popular tastes, to write his *Love's Last Shift* (1696), but it produced no single play of a definitely sentimental cast. *Love's Last Shift* by many has been taken as the starting-point of the sentimental movement; it is merely the first play written consciously to express a feeling which subconsciously had been present in the theatre for more than a decade previously. This comedy marks the beginning of a long series of similar dramas to which may be given the title 'moral-immoral.' It displays, that is to say, the ordinary licentious comic characters and themes of the day with a would-be moral ending in which rapid conversions are attributed to those who had been in the earlier acts presented as sinners. Nothing shows better the hypocritical veneer which spreads over the age. The reformers were satisfied because virtue triumphed in the end; the pleasure-loving spectators were willing to witness the wholly artificial conversions for the sake of the careless intrigue and loose dialogue of the preceding scenes.

If Cibber was the first to produce a play deliberately designed to catch the temper of the age, he was not by any means the chief or the most sentimentally inclined of the early eighteenth-century dramatists. Indeed, in his own way he aided in keeping alive something of the spirit of the manners school in his 'genteel' comedies, works which by their artificiality well reflected the social life of the

Anne era. *She Wou'd and She Wou'd Not* (1702; printed 1703), *The Double Gallant, or, The Sick Lady's Cure* (1707), *The Lady's Last Stake, or, The Wife's Resentment* (1707; printed 1708), and *The Refusal; or, The Ladies Philosophy* (1721), with their affected, vain ladies and their foppish gallants, mirror perfectly a section of this society. Wit of the Congreve sort no longer breathes in these. There is nothing of that rich play of fancy which marks out the latter's works. Instead, we are presented with all the fashionable follies, all the darling vices, of the town. Men and women in those plays no longer hold the same positions they held in Restoration days. Then, the men, if trivially gallant, had at least the gift of intellectual power, and the women were possessed of qualities akin to those of their male companions. Intrigue governed the lives of both, but men and women entered into these intrigues with an equal zest and on equal terms. In the genteel comedies, on the other hand, the men were mere beaux intent not on a satire, a lampoon, a witty jest, but on wigs and shoes and ribbons; their haunt was not the meeting-place of the wits, but the gambling saloons. The women too had degenerated. Their minds were more centred upon trivialities, and they had lost their intellectual power. They had become the playthings of men, to be ridiculed, cheated, and satirized. The women of the Restoration period may have fallen in love with the licentious gallants, but it was with open eyes; now we are approaching the period of the Lovelaces and the Clarissa Harlowes.

The genteel comedy endured all through the eighteenth century, but rapidly it became merged in the sentimental type, so that one of the most typical of Augustan comic forms is that species of drama wherein certain scenes recall the atmosphere of these Cibberian works, and other scenes revel in the expression of the most fulsomely sentimental reflections.

The sentimental movement in the early eighteenth century received its most pronounced impetus from the activities of Sir Richard Steele, author of *The Christian Hero* and joint author of *The Spectator*. Steele's predilections,

in spite of his own somewhat careless life, were all on the side of morality. He believed in domestic happiness, he believed in faithful love, he believed in the goodness of the human heart. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that in his four comedies—*The Funeral; Or, Grief A-la-mode* (1701; printed 1702), *The Lying Lover: or, The Ladies Friendship* (1703; printed 1704), *The Tender Husband: Or, The Accomplish'd Fools* (1705), and *The Conscious Lovers* (1722; printed 1723)—he should have endeavoured to give utterance to his own genuinely sincere reflections upon life. The first of these plays shows his hatred of hypocrisy and his belief in sterling emotion as expressed in the characters of Lady Harriot and of the honest old servant Trusty. *The Lying Lover* penetrates even more deeply into the realm of emotion and of serious reflection. The author's hatred of duelling is fully exemplified in the gaol-scene, when Young Bookwit lies in imminent fear of execution and in contriteness of heart. The question of domestic virtue occupies his mind in *The Tender Husband*, a play which inculcates that honourable love which was one of Steele's chief delights. Excellent as these comedies are, Steele's triumph lies in his last play, in the plot of which he has endeavoured to express his innermost feelings. The hero, Bevil junior, is here presented as about to be married to Lucinda, the daughter of Sealand. He has, however, met and befriended an unknown girl named Indiana, with whom he ultimately falls in love. Unlike the rakes of earlier times he will not endeavour to betray this girl, nor will he marry her without his father's consent. For a time it almost seems as if the play is to end unhappily, until Sealand discovers in Indiana his own daughter. The artificiality of the conclusion may perhaps call forth from modern readers a superior smile, but no superior smiling can lessen the genuine worth of Steele's comedy. The dialogue is excellent, the characters are well drawn, and the situations cleverly managed; and how far Steele has succeeded in drawing comedy from the realms of Restoration licence may be realized even by a cursory glance at one or two of the scenes. This play is

hardly a comedy; it approaches the sphere of the *drame*, that intermediate land where emotions seem to move midway between tragic intensity and comic abandon.

For some years the sentimental style developed but slowly. Sentimentalism, it is true, coloured many an otherwise unsentimental production, but no one for a time succeeded in penning a truly great work of this type. In 1705 Mrs Centlivre produced *The Gamester*, a well-written comedy designed to ridicule the fashionable evils of the gaming-tables, and Taverner in 1717 brought forward *The Artful Wife*, a comedy full of moral reflections planned according to the best sentimental recipes; but these, after all, are not great plays and introduce little that is new. Shortly after 1730, however, two developments are noticeable, each of which was to exercise definite influence on the fortunes of the type in the later years of the century. The first of these tendencies was heralded by one John Kelly in *The Married Philosopher* (1732). This drama has the merit of being the first adaptation in English of a French sentimental work. The importance that attaches to this innovation can be realized only by a glance at the development of the French theatre in the first three decades of the century. Sentimentalism, in its initial stages, was almost entirely an English development. It arose in the midst of Restoration licence and flourished quite independently of Continental example. A change, however, was coming over France as well, a change which three-quarters of a century later was to result in the fury of the Revolution. That change ultimately was inspired by English example. Tentatively the French playwrights started by adapting works which had first seen the light on the London stage. Apologetically they tried their first experiments, until, grown bolder, they triumphantly flared forth their fanfare of literary revolt. That revolt took the form of an extreme type of sentimentalism. There was little of hypocrisy here, none of that crude admixture of licence and moral reflection which distinguished so many English comedies of the time. The Parisian sentimentalists determined from the start to give to mankind their beliefs in the inherent

goodness of the human soul, in the corrupting ways of society, in the virtue of primitive emotions. Many lesser matters they touched on, such as the evils of war and the oppressions of the poor, but those were their fundamental tenets. It is evident that here we possess the Steele type of sentimentalism carried to still further extremes, and it is equally evident that there is here the literary counterpart of those political aspirations which led ultimately to the downfall of the *ancien régime*. For the study of the English theatre this development of serious comedy in France is especially important, for the Continental sentimental drama, nourished as it had been on English example, was freely brought back to London in the middle of the eighteenth century, giving rise to a more pronounced sentimental note in our own theatre. Kelly's work is the herald of that return.

From this rough sketch of the growth of the French *drame* in the eighteenth century, necessarily brief and limned only in general outline, it is clear that direct revolutionary ideas must develop from the cardinal tenets mentioned as belonging to the dramatists. This revolutionary mood finds its echo, too, in the English theatre, becoming first noticeable a few years after the appearance of Kelly's *The Married Philosopher* in Robert Dodsley's *The King and the Miller of Mansfield* (1737), a little playlet which strives to show the inherent community between the sentiments of king and subject, and endeavours to read into its few scenes a definite moral precept. Never so powerful a force in London as it was in Paris, because of the greater liberty and lack of tyranny here, this revolutionary note is also a marked feature of later sentimental endeavour.

It might have been expected that after the thirties of the eighteenth century sentimentalism, thus possessed of inspiration and a definite purpose, would have produced some masterpieces of serious comedy. The actual results, on the contrary, were poor. If sentimentalism brought something new to the theatre it at the same time proved fatally easy of execution. Playwrights found that the

calling forth of emotional scenes required no great exertions, and the coining of reflective sentences for their characters was simple enough. The style, too, led men away from realism. In order to paint, as they thought, more truly the humane qualities of mankind they had recourse to the ideal. They painted not the men and women they saw round them, but abstractions conceived in their own minds. The keen observations and realistic touches which had always brightened earlier comedy began, therefore, to disappear, and vapid, colourless, uninteresting productions were the result. Sentimentalism, too, allied to the genteel comedy, brought about a peculiar convention. In the end it cut out of the theatre all kinds of 'low' characters. A noble savage once or twice might be permitted entrance into the drawing-room, but artisans and the world of labour were studiously shunned. The sentimental drama became pre-eminently the drama of middle- and upper-class society, with conversations and scenery to match.

Many authors after 1750 took to writing these popular works, but none devoted their energies with such unflagging zeal to the cause of the sentimental muse as did Hugh Kelly and Richard Cumberland, contemporaries and companions of Oliver Goldsmith. The first of these two men won a prodigious success with his *False Delicacy* (1768), a comedy eagerly read as well as eagerly followed upon the stage, and repeated that success with his *School for Wives* (1773). *A Word to the Wise* (1770), an equally sentimental play, was unsuccessful because of political prejudice. *False Delicacy* is a play of sentimental refinement which keeps three pairs of unsuited lovers in a constant state of mental and emotional disturbance. Into this theme of conflicting feelings Kelly infuses a mass of reflective sentences all calculated to further the cause of the highest morality. Moments of laughter there are, but rare and fitful in their appearance, by no means calculated to rival the attractions of the sentimental portion. From the purely literary point of view *A Word to the Wise* is the better play, although its historical importance is much slighter. Here Sir John Dormer desires his daughter to

marry Sir George Hastings, a fop. Her heart is given to Villars, the sentimental hero and long-lost son of Willoughby. In her distress the heroine confides in Sir George, and he, though foppish, is sufficiently sympathetic to break off the match, and all ends happily. That Kelly felt at times the ridiculousness of the type he patronized seems proved by Miss Dormer's remark in the first act, "Upon my word, Harriot, a very florid winding up of a period, and very proper for an elevated thought in a sentimental comedy." As with the dramatists of the heroic tragedy, there seems to have been a consciousness among these 'feeling' authors that they were attempting a form of literature capable of vast absurdities.

Richard Cumberland continued the same style with even greater enthusiasm. His famous work *The West Indian* (1771) won for him immense repute, and the sentimental atmosphere he reproduced in *The Fashionable Lover* (1772), *The Jew* (1794), *The Wheel of Fortune* (1795), and a multitude of other pieces in which the characters are all cast in the same mould, uninformed by realistic qualities. The first of these introduces a hero well beloved by those of Cumberland's kin, the slightly rakish youth with a benevolent heart. This gentleman is presented to us as attempting to seduce Louisa Dudley, but, after a series of conflicting purposes and exciting scenes, he marries her, to find that she is by way of being an heiress. The situations are not unskilfully woven together, but it is perfectly plain to even the most ignorant reader that the whole plot of the work is impossible and that the characters act and speak as no living characters would have done. *The Jew* exhibits much the same features. No one of sense will here quarrel with Cumberland's aim, which is sympathetic and humane, but impossible goodness and artificiality mar the whole.

Kelly and Cumberland, as we have seen, by no means stood alone, and other writers perhaps succeeded in writing better, if less popular, plays than any of theirs. Thus as early as 1748 Edward Moore produced an excellently planned comedy in *The Foundling*, a work designed to "steal the pitying Tear from Beauty's Eye" and dealing

with a theme (that of unknown parentage) beloved by the sentimentalists from the time of Steele's *The Conscious Lovers* to that of Cumberland's *The West Indian.* A son sympathetically searching for his father, or a maiden cast parentless upon the world, was sure to call forth that pitying tear in the eighteenth century, even although it can only provoke an incredulous smile in our own. So, too, at a slightly later date Thomas Holcroft ably carried on the tradition. His best-known play, long a stock piece on the stage, was *The Road to Ruin* (1792), but his revolutionary and sentimental proclivities are enshrined in well over a score of dramas. In this 'comedy' we are introduced to a hero in Harry Dornton, who has ruined himself by gambling. Riotous as he is, however, he has a feeling heart, and is cast into despair when he hears that his follies are about to bring ruin on his father. In order to expiate his crimes he proposes to marry Mrs Warren, a rich old widow. In the end, of course, all comes right, with due rewards and punishments. Here again we are introduced to the benevolent libertine, and the revolutionary note which Holcroft would dearly have loved to weave into the play is well brought out in the prologue. The actor who enters to introduce the comedy pretends that the author's original verses have been lost, and proposes to extemporize:

> The author had mounted on the stilts of oratory and elocution:
> Not but he had a smart touch or two, about Poland, France, and the—the revolution;
> Telling us that Frenchmen, and Polishmen, and every man is our brother:
> And that all men, ay, even poor negro men, have a right to be free; one as well as another!
> Freedom at length, said he, like a torrent is spreading and swelling,
> To sweep away pride and reach the most miserable dwelling:
> To ease, happiness, art, science, wit, and genius to give birth;
> Ay, to fertilize a world, and renovate old earth!

By Holcroft's time, of course, the Continental influence had reached its height. Probably his are the translations from Brandes and from Bouilly, entitled respectively *The German Hotel* (1790) and *Deaf and Dumb, or, The Orphan Protected* (1801). In the first we are treated to a thoroughly

melodramatic story, with a villainous Baron Thorck, a sympathetic Dorville, and a distressed heroine. The second is even more serious in tone. The scene is laid in France. In Paris the evil Darlemont has purposely lost the child Count Julio. The latter is befriended by the good old Abbé de l'Épée, who brings him to Toulouse. There they tell the story to Franval, sister of Mariamne, whom St Almes, Darlemont's son, loves. The truth becomes apparent, and Darlemont dies, leaving happiness to the true of heart.

(ii) THE OLDER TRADITION IN GOLDSMITH AND SHERIDAN

It is evident here that comedy has departed far from its original home. In place of laughter, tears; in place of intrigue, melodramatic and distressing situations; in place of rogues and gallants and witty damsels, pathetic heroines and serious lovers and honest servants—this is what we discover in the typical sentimental drama of the late eighteenth century. We are in the world of the *drame*, not of comedy; in the realm of the emotions, not of the intellect. It must not be supposed, of course, that sentimentalism completely dominated the age. Farce still retained its power, and there were many attempts to awake the muse of laughter. Many saw the follies of the sentimental kind. Whitehead gave expression satirically to a common thought when in *A Trip to Scotland* (1770) he makes Sotherton declare that "the good company will perceive, that whatever effect the late run of sentimental comedies may have had upon their audiences, they have at least made the players men of honour"; and Cobb has a characteristic passage in *The First Floor* (1787):

> *Young Whimsey.* Hey-day! what's become of the exquisite luxury of a feeling mind in relieving distress?
>
> *Furnish.* It may do very well for people of fortune, but a tradesmen [*sic*] shou'd never indulge in luxury.
>
> *Young Whimsey.* Consider, generosity is part of the business of man.
>
> *Furnish.* And a d——d losing trade it is—therefore it shan't be a part of *my* business.

It is worthy of note that according to *The Theatrical Dictionary* this work met with "great applause."

Sheridan and Goldsmith were, of course, the leaders of the anti-sentimental movement, but they had been preceded by many dramatists who kept to the older paths. Samuel Foote, a prolific writer of the third quarter of the century, thus poured forth a series of more or less farcical pieces packed with personal satire. *The Knights* (1749) is of this type, as is *The Orators* (1762); less of satire but more of farcical wit appear in *The Minor* (1760) and in *The Maid of Bath* (1771), although the former contains a direct attack upon the Methodists, and the latter introduces a portrait of Miss Linley, later to be the wife of Richard Brinsley Sheridan. Foote's work was varied in style, but in all his plays the same qualities of satire and farcical wit appear. We cannot accord to them the title of true comedies, but in them is preserved something of the older style of comic composition.

Various other dramatists supplied the theatre with similar fare during Foote's lifetime. George Colman, generally known as 'the Elder' to distinguish him from his son, George Colman the Younger, was one of the most vigorous of those who supported the cause of laughter and opposed sentimental pity. *Polly Honeycombe* (1760) is a clever satire of contemporary follies, and, as has often been pointed out, anticipates not only in general style but in definite phrases Sheridan's more polished satire in *The Rivals*. Colman's opposition to the sentimental vein is seen clearly enough in his selection of *Tom Jones* for the theme of his next work, *The Jealous Wife* (1761). This comedy is strictly in the style of the Restoration masters, although there is not in it the sparkling wit or delicate touch of the Congreve pen. Nevertheless, the dialogue is capably written, and Colman deserves unstinted praise for his able treatment of his subject-matter. Lord Ogleby in *The Clandestine Marriage* (1766) is another echo of Restoration days. Fops in Colman's time had not been common, and if they appeared occasionally they were vapid and uninteresting. Lord Ogleby, however, is in the best style

of the older comedy, and the presentation of his character well qualified Colman for a place among the true masters of comic portraiture. More numerous touches of a sentimental character appear in Arthur Murphy's plays, but his two comedies *The Way to Keep Him* (1760) and *All in the Wrong* (1761) retain something of true comic atmosphere, and many of his lighter pieces belong to the farcical and satiric strain. Later, too, Mrs Hannah Cowley, author of nearly a score of comedies, farces, and tragedies, strove to keep alive the earlier spirit. *A Bold Stroke for a Husband* (1783) is probably her best-known play, but *A School for Greybeards* (1786) and *The Town Before You* (1794) perhaps possess more of the true *vis comica.* The second of these plays belongs to the Spanish intrigue school and goes back for inspiration to Mrs Behn and Mrs Centlivre. Slight as the vulgarity of this piece seems when compared with the comedies of Mrs Cowley's predecessors, it was nearly damned for its indecency and only won through because of its *verve.* The plot is a hackneyed one in which Don Gaspar is destined to marry Antonia, who in her turn loves the banished Don Henry. The lover, by disguising himself, manages to insinuate himself into Don Gaspar's house. A sub-plot deals with the gay Seraphnia, wife of Don Alexis, who accepts the attentions of Octavio in order that her step-daughter Viola may escape with her lover, Don Sebastian.

These comedies, which are merely a few chosen out of a vast number of similar pieces, show well that even the force of revolutionar

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Sheridan's greatness, but many deserve to be remembered for their own intrinsic merits, and some of them gave

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nedy in 1759, when he himself was thirty-one years of age, in his essay on *The Present State of Polite Learning,* and a decade later, in 1768, dared to bring forward his comedy *The Good Natur'd Man* as an attack upon the style of Kelly, Cumberland,

popularity. Within those years Sheridan's activity was constant. The ballad-opera entitled *The Duenna* (1775) has already been noted above, but this takes second place to *The School for Scandal* (1777), *The Critic; or A Tragedy Rehearsed* (1779; printed 1781), and even *A Trip to Scarborough* (1777; printed 1781). None of these in any way resembles Goldsmith's plays. *The Rivals* presents, not an admixture of Shakespearian humour with features of the school of manners, but the very atmosphere of Congreve modified by exaggerated humours of the Jonsonian type. The names of the characters are mostly of the humours sort—Sir Lucius O'Trigger, Sir Anthony Absolute, and Lydia Languish may be taken as examples—and the exaggeration of special traits is well shown in the notorious Mrs Malaprop. In the main this comedy presents a direct challenge to the sentimentalists, although in the Julia and Faulkland portions there are evident features of the Cumberland style. Lydia's love of a romantic elopement, however, and her fantastic notions of a lover's duties are clearly modelled as satires on the yet popular style. *The Rivals*, as a whole, is a somewhat disappointing play. Some scenes in it are so excellent that we notice all the more clearly the weaknesses in the whole plan. Sentimental motives clash with elements taken from the Congreve school; Jonsonian exaggeration conflicts heavily with the play of wit and fancy. About the whole play, too, breathes an atmosphere of farce, and although there is something of farce in every great comedy this lower strain tends to weaken the general effect of Sheridan's work.

The School for Scandal is a more homogeneous work of art. Nothing truly disturbs the constant glitter of its wit, and the situations are never exaggerated or bizarre; rather do they stand forward as among the most perfect in the English theatre. No single scene possibly has won so much fame as the screen episode in Act IV of this play. Again there is satire of the sentimental strain in the person of Joseph Surface, but this direct satire is subordinated to the expression of free wit which irradiates all the characters. There is no attempt here to catch the subtle delicacy of

Goldsmith's comedies, no effort to seize upon the inner movements of the [illegible] ness or emotion; [illegible] the humour of th [illegible] and Congreve, not the traits of mankind, but their social manners.

With *The School for Scandal* we reach the culmination of the anti-sentimental movement. This, as it were, was the last word of the Augustan writers, for sentimentalism is, in its own way, the forerunner of romance. Kelly and Cumberland passed away, but out of their supersensitive style arose the deeper humanitarianism of the revolutionary and romantic periods. The poets of the nineteenth century, full of heroic ardours and serious ideals, were not given to laughter, and the comedy of manners for nearly a century vanished from the world of creative drama.

CHAPTER V

THE DOMESTIC TRAGEDY

WITH the treatment of Goldsmith and Sheridan we have passed into the camp of the anti-sentimentalists. It will now be necessary to return to the beginning of the eighteenth century and the rise of the sentimental school in order to trace a dramatic development intimately connected with that school, which ultimately produced the dramatic form known as the domestic tragedy.

Domestic tragedy, as we have seen, had been known in the early seventeenth century, producing then a distinguished masterpiece in Heywood's *A Woman Killed with Kindness*; but in the progress of romantic tragi-comedy and of the heroic drama this domestic note ceased to be remembered. Playwrights passed to the East for inspiration, and could see no sorrows but those of kings and princely heroes. The pathetic movement, however, marked in the plays of Banks and Otway pointed to a reaction from this style. In *The Orphan* the characters are aristocratic, but not royal; in Banks' plays the heroes and heroines are taken from English history. Thomas Southerne was bold enough to make the central figure of his *Oroonoko* (1696) an ill-used native chief. It is hard to call forth pity for impossible Oriental heroes, and the dramatists saw that in order to achieve their purpose they would have to deal with themes nearer home. Tentatively they began, as has been seen, to treat of English history and of heroes under the rank of princes and emperors. This attempt to deal with humbler themes brought with it a change of style. In the first place, in order to bring the dialogue more into harmony with the subject all the inflated language inherited from the heroic school began to disappear. The conversation became more ordinary, and the blank verse struggled to

emancipate itself into prose. Secondly, with the loss of royal dignity the playwrights endeavoured to throw into their dramas an additional air of terror and awe, and, in doing so, they captured again something of that spirit of fate which is associated with the names of Æschylus and Shakespeare. Actions in these plays were dependent not merely upon the motives of the characters, but upon the workings of some unseen and tremendous cosmic force.

In the eighteenth century itself the first example of this type of 'fatal' drama was *The Rival Brothers* (1704), a tragedy based on *The Orphan*; the first example of a serious play with wholly middle-class English characters followed a few years later in Aaron Hill's *The Fatal Extravagance* (1721), a work which returns for inspiration to the pseudo-Shakespearian *Yorkshire Tragedy*. These plays, and others of a similar nature, laid the basis for the appearance of George Lillo's *The London Merchant; or The History of George Barnwell* (1731), a play which fluttered all London society when it was first produced and remained a stock piece for many years. The influence of the sentimental style is clearly visible in this work. The aim is definitely moral, and serious reflections, often wholly undramatic, appear in almost every scene as they do in the comedies of Kelly and of Cumberland. Notwithstanding this, Lillo's endeavour marks the beginning of a new era of tragic activity in England. Here at last was found one daring enough to make the hero of a tragedy a mere apprentice; here was one who succeeded in calling forth from the breasts of fashionable spectators tears for an ordinary middle-class family. Hardly anyone at the time failed to realize its power. Men of letters praised it. Royalty perused it in palace boudoir. Spectators flocked again and again to see it on the stage. Foreign dramatists, seeing the possibilities of the type, hastened to adapt it and pen other imitations of its style. Unassuming as it appeared to be, *The London Merchant* marked the downfall of the classical tragedy, drove outworn themes from the stage, and established the basis of the modern theatre.

This work Lillo followed with *Fatal Curiosity*, a finely

written tragedy which deals with an ordinary peasant couple led by poverty to commit a terrible crime. The plot is simple but effective, and the atmosphere of fate which Lillo has succeeded in casting into his play proves his true *flair* for the theatre. Like *The London Merchant*, *Fatal Curiosity* was translated into several languages, and the story gave inspiration in our own time to the youthful Rupert Brooke for his *Lithuania*.

By the time when *Fatal Curiosity* was produced the eighteenth-century audiences had become well accustomed to the novel form of drama which had grown up among them, although the supersensitiveness of sentimentalism would not permit them to witness anything savouring of 'lowness.' They did not call George Barnwell 'low,' but they decided that the Mrs Lupine scenes in Charles Johnson's *Cœlia* (1732) had that quality, and accordingly damned the tragedy. Witnessing the success of Lillo, other dramatists attempted to pen plays of a similar character. Thus John Hewitt came forward with his *Fatal Falsehood: or Distress'd Innocence* (1734) and Thomas Cooke with his peculiarly named play *The Mournful Nuptials, or Love the Cure of all Woes* (printed 1739; acted as *Love the Cause and Cure of Grief, or The Innocent Murderer*, 1743), but these are not great plays. In each are some sparks of genius, but the dialogue in both is dull, and the characters, albeit more interestingly delineated than the characters of pseudo-classic tragedy, lack vitality. Only one author, indeed, rises to true heights in this style. That author is Edward Moore, who in *The Gamester* (1753) produced an affecting and effective domestic tragedy. The story is one of unrelieved misery. Beverley, the hero, rushes into financial ruin through his inordinate passion for gambling. Reduced to his last few coppers, he takes his wife's jewels, and, playing recklessly, loses them. In the meantime, Lewson, the lover of Beverley's sister Charlotte, discovers the evil machinations of the hero's pretended friend Stukely. The latter, realizing that his exposure is imminent, in structs his tool Bates to murder the lover; he is assumed to be dead, and the blame is cast on Beverley, who in his

misery takes poison and dies after hearing that a large sum of money has been left to him. The only gleam of sunshine comes from the discovery that Lewson is still alive and will probably be united to his beloved Charlotte. Moore's triumph rests in his grimly concentrated effect. Save for the slightly developed love between Lewson and Charlotte, hardly anything extraneous is permitted to intrude into the play. A dark air broods over the whole, and the weight of tragic intensity raises *The Gamester* to a level with the best of our *bourgeois* tragedies.

It may appear strange that with this rapid development of middle-class drama in the middle of the eighteenth century the type should not have been favoured by other dramatists in the later decades of the century or in the romantic period proper. Several tendencies, however, operated against its success. In the first place, sentimentalism inclined toward the *drame* rather than tragedy. A genteel audience felt so pleased with itself when after indulging in its best of pitying tears it found the sinner reclaimed and the distressed maiden saved, sympathy rewarded and evil exposed, that the dramatists were loth to destroy their pretty taste. Accordingly *The Road to Ruin* took the place of *The Gamester.* Secondly, the power of appreciating tragic intensity of purpose was rapidly being lost. The heroic drama, the pseudo-classic and the pathetic tragedy, had by degrees weakened the appreciation of the spectators. Show and opera had brought them to desire their tragedies to be dizened out with ample scenic decorations and vitiated with music. Even in *Macbeth* they preferred the witches to be three pretty chorus girls rather than the weird hags that Shakespeare imagined. Thirdly, the romantic poets, who might have done something for this style, were nearly all wrapt up in their idealistic visions of Italy and the East. They looked with contempt upon the squalid slums and vapid suburbs of London, and preferred to write of Spanish castles, of ruined Italian abbeys, of Oriental adventurings. Never could they restrain themselves to come down to the world of ordinary life, to feel ordinary sorrows and appreciate ordinary joys,

to thrill the hearts of their readers not by the glorious rhapsody of inspired imagination, but by simple touches requiring no less genius and skill. After its rapid rise in the eighteenth century the *bourgeois* drama in England died. It was left to French and German playwrights to bring the form to perfection and reintroduce it once more on the London stage.

PART V

DRAMA IN THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY

CHAPTER I

THE MAIN TENDENCIES OF THE TIME

AFTER the appearance of Sheridan and Goldsmith the drama rapidly decayed. For this several reasons may be brought forward, each of which must be considered in relation to the others. Chief in importance, unquestionably, is that which concerns the size of the playhouses. In 1787 the Theatre Royal in Covent Garden was enlarged, and five years later it was rebuilt; Drury Lane about the same time witnessed a similar transformation. The results were as might have been expected. The profits of those in charge of the theatres were sometimes much larger than before, because of the increased seating accommodation, but the distance of the stage from the pit and galleries rendered subtle acting impossible and forced the performers to indulge in rant and bombast. It is not mere fancy to argue this as one of the main causes of dramatic decay. Contemporaries were unanimous in declaiming against these lofty structures Mrs Siddons herself, we are told, made her inflections coarser and rougher; [illegible] the tender whisper or [illegible] ous by the necessity [illegible] words were to carry [illegible] oanna Baillie, with many others, proclaimed, in the words of the latter, that "the largeness of our two regular theatres, so unfavourable for hearing clearly, has changed in a great measure the character of pieces exhibited within their walls." It is clear that in these theatres anything approaching the comedy of manners

would have been impossible, that subtle tragedy wou[ld] have failed to appeal, that only the roughest and rude[st] effects could be employed. Hence the rise and popularit[y] of the spectacular play. Never before had scenic artist[s] and machinists had so much to do. All kinds of gorgeous *tableaux* were arranged. The words of the drama mattered little so long as the plot was crudely indicated and plenty of opportunity given to the manager to devise attractive scenes and *ensembles*. So, too, the power of music increased. Choruses which filled with sound the huge spaces of the theatres made great appeal, and melodrama with its songs, its stereotyped characters, its boldly delineated plot, became the form of dramatic literature *par excellence*.

It was probably the size of these theatres which served to intensify the evils of the audience. Society was libertine and vulgar, and the upper-class people set a tone in the playhouses which was aped by the more dissolute among the *bourgeoisie*. From contemporaries we learn of the number of prostitutes who thronged the *foyers*, of the countless assignations made in the theatres, of the coarse language heard on all sides, of the drunkenness and the rioting. Boaden in his *Life of Kemble* (1825) tells a characteristic story. *Coriolanus* was being performed one November evening in the year 1806, Mrs Siddons herself playing the part of Volumnia. "When," says the author, "Mrs Siddons was supplicating as Volumnia, the conqueror, her son, to spare his country; when every eye should have been riveted to the scene, every ear burning with the pure flame of patriot vehemence—at such a moment an apple was thrown upon the stage, and fell between Mrs Siddons and Mr Kemble." Kemble naturally protested vigorously and received a verbal reply "that this apple was thrown at some of the disorderly females in the boxes." Debauchery, fashionable vice, evils of all kinds centred in these houses of amusement, and the saner, soberer people who might have aided toward the elaboration of a finer drama were forced to keep themselves apart.

The size of the theatres, the prevailing show and spectacle

demanded and supplied, and the class of spectators who frequented them naturally led many men who might have devoted their genius to the drama to turn to other forms of literature. Of what use was it to pen plays, to work out with the sweat of the brow some soul-consuming tragedy, when the manager, superciliously superior, condemned it as not affording sufficient opportunities for the exercise of the stage-carpenter's craft? In point of fact, we find [illegible] gulf between the men of [illegible] every poet of the time [illegible] n the medium of drama, [illegible] he consequence was that when some writer of genius decided to pen a play he did so for the reading public—not because he would not have liked to make money out of a theatrical production, but simply because he knew that there could be no hope for him in the playhouse. Never before were there published so many unacted plays. In the eighteenth century we find the booksellers issuing political pamphlets in dramatic form, but the number of unacted regular comedies and tragedies is comparatively small. In the early nineteenth century every year brought forth its regular series of unacted poetic plays. This separation of the poets from the stage led to an intensification of the evils already noted. It divorced the men of genius from the theatre; it prevented them from learning their trade where alone it could be learned—in the playhouse itself. As a result their plays betray a lack of knowledge of stage requirements even beyond their not always sincere declaration that these works were intended only for reading. On the other hand, they left in the service of the theatre only a group of mediocre authors, servile enough to write according to the dictates of a manager himself under the domination of the public. The stage, cut off from the world of literature, gradually grew worse as the years progressed, degenerating rapidly in style and character-delineation.

It may be noted here that perhaps too much can be made of the prevailing lyrical note of the early nineteenth century. It is assuredly true that all the poets of this

time have expressed themselves most perfectly through the medium of lyrical verse, and equally true that the qualities necessary for the production of good lyrical poetry are not by any means such as will produce good drama. At the same time, two points must be noted. The Elizabethan age itself was distinguished as an age of song as well as an age of dramatic creativeness; Shakespeare could express himself not only in *Othello* and *The Tempest*, but also in his sonnets and his songs. Moreover, all these romantic poets of the nineteenth century attempted the dramatic form—attempted it, too, in spite of the rebuffs they received from the managers. From Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Scott to Tennyson and Browning we find this is true; and we may legitimately argue that, had these poets been given the opportunity of producing their works upon the stage, their genius might have seemed to-day less lyrical than it is. They would have learned from the theatre the delineation of character; they would have studied theatrical dialogue; they would not have been so wrapped as they were within their own imaginations. Still another thing held them back, and herein they themselves were to blame. Perhaps, had any one of them given to the theatre a form of dramatic literature entirely new, or a style distinctly suited to contemporary conditions, he would have had a hearing. As it was, all of them kept to the old paths, and to these paths they were kept by the critics. What might have spurred the poets to fresh efforts would have been a criticism which devoted itself to technical details, which studied form and plan and tragic aim, the nature of theatrical dialogue, and the management of plot. This criticism, however, has come only in our own days. In the early nineteenth century Lamb's *Specimens* and Coleridge's *Lectures on Shakespeare* are characteristic of a general trend of critical judgment. The former does not consider plays as plays; he treats them as collections of poetical passages, those passages being capable of detachment from the whole of which they form a part. But a drama is not a collection of poems; it is, or ought to be, an organic whole, the beauty of which is

destroyed as soon as a portion is removed from it, and th charm of whose individual component parts is unintelligibl without reference to the others. Coleridge takes a differen line of criticism. He is interested in metaphysical dis quisitions; *he loves to probe into the psychology of Shake speare's heroes*; but no more than Lamb does he dea with the plays as works of dramatic art. For all that h says about them, they might as well have been novels Nowhere does he attempt to show exactly how Shake speare subordinated his material to the exigencies of th theatre, wherein he showed himself the greatest dramati genius of all time. Such criticism as this was more tha fatal for men who needed the spur of reality and the bridl of hard technical training to fit them for the task the essayed.

Perhaps other causes may be adduced, but all other must be subordinate to these. We may say, for exampl that the strict exercise of the censorship in an age whe most young poets were revolutionaries was bound t influence the production of plays, and certainly the offic of the censor must be accorded its place among the mino contributory causes of dramatic decline. On the othe hand, this cannot have been one of the principal reasons it merely formed another drop in the mass of water thrown upon the dramatic fire. So, too, we may say that a nev reading public had arisen, that the theatre had lost it former appeal, *that men and women preferred novels t* plays. This, again, is certainly true, but are the play houses empty to-day during a period of unprecedented fic tional activity? Never, say the publishers, have so man novels been printed as now; yet men still love to go t the theatre to witness comedy or tragedy, farce or revue No other form of literature can quite take the place of th drama; and even Scott's novels, popular as they were could not have withheld men from the playhouses.

Drama, then, from 1790 onward is seen to divide itsel ... the former becoming ... and more trivial, th ... theatrical needs. O

both, however, operated the same forces. German romance charmed Scott and Shelley as well as the most negligible of dramatists; medievalism affected both; and sentimentalism, now in the guise of mawkish prudery, now in that of rich humanitarianism, dominated both. The two forms, therefore, do not lie so far apart as may appear at first sight.

CHAPTER II

THE LITERARY DRAMA

THE 'decline of the drama' was a theme which exercised many men's minds during the period from 1790 to the time when Robertson brought forth something which seemed to betoken the awakening of a new age, and countless efforts were made to provide for the theatre a drama which should be worthier than facile melodrama and miserable farce. Practically all of these attempts, however, were doomed from the very start by the fact that they were indulged in, not, as it were, from within the theatre, but from without. A pronounced tone of superiority accompanies most of this work; instead of coming down to the level of the stage and endeavouring gradually to raise the standards of performance, the literary men persisted in standing, god-like, aloof, carefully and self-consciously lowering down their precious tragedies and dismally monotonous comedies as though these were machine-borne divinities through which alone the evil current of events might be altered. This sense of superiority, allied to a general ignorance of theatrical conditions, marred practically all their efforts.

The general tendency of serious drama in the eighteenth century had been classical. A certain liberalizing element had, it is true, intruded because of the genuine enthusiasm, felt by nearly all, for the plays of Shakespeare, Otway, and Rowe; and through the hesitating imitation of these, the stricter forms of the pseudo-classic stage were oftentimes abandoned—a sparkle of life gleamed fitfully in scenes otherwise mechanically conceived and hopelessly chilled by conventi [illegible]
Besic [illegible]
whicl [illegible]
domestic tragedy, inaugurated by Lillo; the second was a

type of serious play which might be called pseudo-romantic. Of the latter type John Home's *Douglas* (1756) was the earliest specimen—a play which, although artificially rhetorical in dialogue and showing manifest signs of indebtedness to the writers of the classic school, yet betrays a certain novelty in its theme (based on the ballad of *Gil Morrice*) and in its endeavour, not merely to arouse a mildly intellectual interest, but to call on the passionate sympathy of the audience. Neither Home nor his actors, it is true, dared go very far. "On the stage," we are told by a contemporary, writing of this author's *The Fatal Discovery* (1769),

> we saw the youthful Roman *bounding* with all the vigour and alacrity that age, gout, and rheumatism, usually inspire. The heroes of this truly Erse performance,
>
> *Who never yet had being,*
> *Or, being, wore no breeches,*
>
> were invested in gold and purple, while a Grecian palace was allotted to the monarch of the rock.

This is symbolic of much effort in the kind during the last years of the eighteenth century. *The Fatal Discovery* takes its theme from Macpherson's *Ossian*, but this Ossianic theme is classicized almost out of recognition. One or two other similar plays appeared before the year 1800, among them not least in importance being Robert Jephson's *The Law of Lombardy* (1779), a tragic rendering of the tale told in *Much Ado about Nothing*, and his *The Count of Narbonne* (1781), which is based on the thrillingly 'romantic' novel of Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto*. Walpole himself provided an even more startling unacted play of the type in *The Mysterious Mother* (1768).

Of these three styles of tragic drama—the classic, the domestic, and the pseudo-romantic—the first, quite naturally, did not receive much formal recognition in an age when poets were revolutionaries battling against those forces of critical restraint which had been imposed on literature by Pope and his companions. There were certainly some fervent supporters, such as John Delap, who had started his career with a *Hecuba* in 1761 (published 1762) and who carried on his activities till the printing of *Abdalla* in 1803,

and there were others who, like Byron, professed an admira tion for the old literary laws and made fitful attempts t follow them in practice. For all essential purposes, how ever, we may say that the rule of the Augustans was dead.

The domestic tragedy, it might have been thought, woul have provided a sphere of legitimate and inspiring activit for the romantics. There was something of novelty here there was offered the possibility of searching criticism of life there was presented to the dramatists a field comparativel untilled which they might cultivate and sow as they desired Unfortunately, the literary men of the time seemed abov these mundane things. The poets preferred to soar t realms more fantastically conceived; if all did not, witl

Home and Jephson had both been deeply influenced by Shakespeare's works, and this Shakespearian influence is the most marked feature of the literary drama during the early nineteenth century Sometimes it gets confused with the strain of German medievalism—the spectacular thrill of Kotzebue or the sensationalism of Schiller—but everywhere

evolving plot and theme, strikes false, shallow, and artificial.

not a Beatrice, but a Viola, here called Zamora. The way in which this Shakespearian tendency was allied to a tendency in the direction of 'Gothic' romance is shown by

the second play, *The Curfew*. Gloomy halls and dismal caves, bands of marauding robbers, a stock 'Baron,' appeals to superstitious sentiment, recognitions of long-lost wives and of long-lost sons—all these are introduced into this hotchpotch of romantic imaginings, and are expressed in language which seems an equal mixture of debased Shakespeare and adulterated Fletcher.

Typical, too, are the *Plays on the Passions*, issued in a series of three volumes dated 1798, 1802, and 1812, by Joanna Baillie. These are well-meaning enough; but the path of true drama cannot be paved with good intentions alone. No one now reading these long-forgotten dramas can fail to be impressed by Joanna Baillie's genuine talent for poetic expression. The language rarely sinks to mediocrity, and rises at times to a truly impassioned utterance. Yet the *Plays on the Passions* are not great tragedies. Joanna Baillie had no real knowledge of the stage, and as a consequence her dramas frequently fail in regard to technique. She was merely a woman of letters condescending to show the theatre what it ought to be; she was not, as every playwright should be, honestly anxious to make herself acquainted with the many requirements of the playhouse. Beyond that, too, her tragedies have their weaknesses. The authoress has gone the wrong way to work. Shakespeare, we may believe, did not say to himself, "I shall write a play on Jealousy," and turn out *Othello*, or "I shall write a play on Pride," and turn out *Lear*. The cardinal passion of Shakespeare's dramas is dependent upon the characters and the theme; Joanna Baillie's plays have character and theme dependent on a preconceived passion. This error, it may be noted, was shared by other more distinguished poets: Coleridge's *Remorse* is a cardinal instance. Moreover, in penning their tragedies the greater dramatists do not limit themselves to one emotion. Joanna Baillie never seems to trust herself to speak of pride when her theme is jealousy, or to speak of hate when her theme is ambition. She has successfully documented men's emotions, boxed them up in nice little romantic caskets, to be opened one at a time with excessive care. Still further, Joanna Baillie's

plays display marked crudities. Her love of murder as a [illegible]

The only one of her plays which won any sort of success on the stage was *De Montfort* (acted 1800), and that moderate success the authoress owed apparently less to her own genius than to a wonderful piece of stage-carpentry by which the theatre was turned into a fourteenth-century church magnificently decorated.

Of the several members of the early or 'Wordsworth' group of romantic poets, all tried their hands at play-writing. Of these, Robert Southey, because of the immense influence he exerted on the others, may first be mentioned. His dramas all belong to the early pantisocracy period, when his heart was thrilled by visions of a millennium heralded by the French Revolution. *The Fall of Robespierre. An historic drama,* written in collaboration with Coleridge, appeared in 1794, and *Wat Tyler, a Dramatic Poem,* was issued surreptitiously by his enemies in 1817, when its author had long left his youthful republican sentiments and had turned to Toryism instead. Both of these are pitiful enough, and the latter reads almost as if it were a parody of sentimental, humanitarian melodrama. They probably aid in indicating another weakness in the nineteenth-century poetic drama. All the poets of the time were doctrinaire; they sometimes seemed to abandon the bare slopes of Parnassus in order to preach pathetically [illegible]

The playwright may show his opinions indirectly, if he pleases; he may state a problem or lay open some festering social sore; but as soon as he be[illegible] his plays as if they were sermons, and his theatr[illegible] church, he inevitably fails.

A trifle more successful was Samu[illegible] in his *Remorse* (1813), a revised version of the

which had been sent to Sheridan as early as 1797 and impolitely refused. *Remorse* reminds us somewhat of Joanna Baillie's productions. Don Alvar is the upright hero of the play, whose life is plotted against by his evil brother, Ordonio. After a thrilling series of adventurous actions, in the course of which the honest Moor, Isidore, and Ordonio are slaughtered, Alvar throws off his disguise, and the whole ends on a moderately happy note. There is little universality in the work, and rarely if ever do we thoroughly associate ourselves with the characters. In general atmosphere this play shows clearly the influence of German romantic dramas, the theme of two brothers, one of whom is honest and the other evil-minded, bearing a close resemblance to the then popular story of Schiller's *Die Räuber*.

Some of the same defects may be traced in the pessimistic *Borderers* (written 1795–6) of William Wordsworth. This play even more than *Osorio* may be traced in inception to a Schillerian source. The crime committed with the best-intentioned motives is clearly a legacy of the German drama, but Wordsworth has nothing of Schiller's power over dramatic form. Touches of character-delineation there are in Marmaduke and Oswald, but never carried out to fullness, so that the personages of the tragedy remain without life. The plot is chaotically constructed, and the author is led to pour forth in unrestrained narrative pages of blank verse in his most uninspired strain.

Sir Walter Scott too tried his hand at drama. His studies in German literature led him early to write his rather pedestrian rendering of *Götz von Berlichingen*, and from that he turned to more original composition in *The House of Aspen* (printed 1830). This latter work is thoroughly in the German style, and can take rank only with the spectacular plays of *The Castle Spectre* class. Nowhere in it does the author of *Waverley* show that power which was to make him one of the greatest literary figures in Europe.

Other writers of the time fondly hoped for success in the theatrical world. Charles Lamb, who furnished Coleridge with the prologue for *Remorse*, attempted a tragedy in *John*

Woodvil, to which was given originally the title of *Pride's Cure* (written 1799; printed 1802). This tragedy, which Lamb submitted unthanked to Kemble, again displays well the weakness of the poetic drama of the time. Poetry there is in it, with, as might have been expected, numerous reminiscences of the Elizabethan dramatists, but of co-ordinated central power it has none, and the characterization is, at best, mere sketchy patchwork.

When we come to the later or 'Byron' group of romantic authors there is an equal attention paid to drama. Byron himself left a series of dramas, some of which were acted; Shelley gave us *The Cenci* and *Prometheus Unbound*; Keats penned his *Otho the Great*.

Of Keats' effort, executed in collaboration with Armitage Brown, not much need be said. It was apparently composed in the year 1819, and actually was accepted for [illegible] uced. [illegible] ition [illegible], the [illegible] ister, Auranthe, to the latter's son, Ludolph. The maiden, however, has, in order to shield her own stained honour, slandered the innocent Erminia, whose lack of guilt is attested to by the monk Ethelbert and by Albert. In the end Auranthe dies, and Ludolph goes mad. The purposes of the characters do not always seem plain, and the verse, contrary to [illegible]

It is certainly true that this is one of the most striking tragedies among the many poetic plays of the century, but we must guard against overrating it because of the general level of dramatic mediocrity. Assuredly we may find in it many defects, defects due to the lyrical tendencies of the author and to his lack of theatrical knowledge. Many passages seem to be dramatically unnecessary, and at times the wealth of language makes the action drag. Even beyond this we may question whether *The Cenci* actually succeeds in its aim. Beatrice Cenci is obviously the central

figure, but, in reading as on the stage, she somehow fails to convince us. Her uncompromising denial of complicity in the murder of her father seems to us not in harmony with her character as displayed in the first acts and at the end of the play. It seems here as if Shelley had been misled by his own idealistic visions. For him Beatrice's pollution was a merely earthly thing; it did not, or should not, have affected the freedom of her mind. Had she been perfect, therefore, she ought to have allowed her father's crime to go unavenged. As it was, Shelley evidently desired to display in her a fatal flaw, which took form in her desire for vengeance. So soon as she had given way to that desire, evil impulses came upon her, and her character weakened. The tragedy, therefore, appears to be set on a plane too high above this earth. For the ordinary reader or spectator Beatrice's *ἁμαρτία* is unintelligible, few being able to soar with the author of the "Ode to the West Wind" to the idealistic realms where his airy spirit found a home and resting-place. This defect in *The Cenci* is greater than that commonly adduced, the ghastliness of the plot. Certainly the theme possesses a horror which even fine acting cannot dispel, but this we might have forgiven had the purposes of the characters been thoroughly intelligible. The greatest drama is idealistic in essence, but fundamentally it lays its basis in the common aspirations and passions of mankind.

Among the various poets of this period Lord Byron comes nearest to success in the world of drama. His plays are not only more numerous than those of the others; they possess greater power and reveal a surer knowledge of theatrical technique. The dramas of this author commence with *Manfred* (1817), and continue through *Marino Faliero*, *Sardanapalus*, *The Two Foscari*, and *Cain* (all 1821), to *Werner* (acted 1830). All of these reveal the presence of a creative spirit at once more in touch with ordinary life and more tragically majestic than may be found in any of the other poets. The Romantic writers habitually put themselves forward in their dramas, but not Coleridge, Shelley, or Keats could have been a tragic hero. Byron, however, is shaped in that mould from which issued forth, more than

two centuries previously, the tremendous heroes of Christopher Marlowe. Like Faustus and Tamburlaine, Byron had colossal aspirations; as with them the universe, and the universe alone, took toll of his too great human presumption. The creator of *Childe Harold* and of *Don Juan* had in him the stuff of which great drama is made. *Manfred*, perhaps, is the weakest of all his plays, although nowhere has Byron so fully expressed his misanthropic hatred of man and his appreciation of the grandeur of Nature's solitary spaces. With *Manfred* must be associated *Werner; or, The Inheritance*, dedicated to Goethe and clearly influenced both by *Götz von Berlichingen* and by *Die Räuber*. In this drama Siegendorf is shown to us, disguised as Werner, stranded in a decayed palace in Silesia. His arch-enemy, Stralenheim, suddenly arrives in the same spot. In his poverty the former, through a secret passage, goes and robs the latter, and a soldier called Gabor is accused of the crime. In order to save the man whom he knows to be innocent Werner places this soldier in the concealed passage. Meanwhile events have developed. Ulric is discovered to be Werner's son; in hatred he murders Stralenheim, and Gabor is now supposed to have been the assassin. Werner makes efforts to discover him, but when he is found the guilt of Ulric is shown. Tragic emotion thus results from the pride and passion of Werner and from the contortion of family hate inherited by his son, Ulric. At the same [illegible]

portrayed. Yet, imaginatively powerful as these plays are, and possessing genuine dramatic qualities, there is something which we feel to be lacking in them. Byron has the creative power, but we have the impression that his tragedies, instead of being great, merely might have been great. Byron may have a personality more humanly appealing than had Shelley or Wordsworth, but his over-emphasized subjectivity becomes monotonous in the end, and, close to life though he was, we feel in him too the note of

figure, but, in reading as on the stage, she somehow fails to convince us. Her uncompromising denial of complicity in the murder of her father seems to us not in harmony with her character as displayed in the first acts and at the end of the play. It seems here as if Shelley had been misled by his own idealistic visions. For him Beatrice's pollution was a merely earthly thing; it did not, or should not, have affected the freedom of her mind. Had she been perfect, therefore, she ought to have allowed her father's crime to go unavenged. As it was, Shelley evidently desired to display in her a fatal flaw, which took form in her desire for vengeance. So soon as she had given way to that desire, evil impulses came upon her, and her character weakened. The tragedy, therefore, appears to be set on a plane too high above this earth. For the ordinary reader or spectator Beatrice's ἁμαρτία is unintelligible, few being able to soar with the author of the "Ode to the West Wind" to the idealistic realms where his airy spirit found a home and resting-place. This defect in *The Cenci* is greater than that commonly adduced, the ghastliness of the plot. Certainly the theme possesses a horror which even fine acting cannot dispel, but this we might have forgiven had the purposes of the characters been thoroughly intelligible. The greatest drama is idealistic in essence, but fundamentally it lays its basis in the common aspirations and passions of mankind.

Among the various poets of this period Lord Byron comes nearest to success in the world of drama. His plays are not only more numerous than those of the others; they possess greater power and reveal a surer knowledge of theatrical technique. The dramas of this author commence with *Manfred* (1817), and continue through *Marino Faliero*, *Sardanapalus*, *The Two Foscari*, and *Cain* (all 1821), to *Werner* (acted 1830). All of these reveal the presence of a creative spirit at once more in touch with ordinary life and more tragically majestic than may be found in any of the other poets. The Romantic writers habitually put themselves forward in their dramas, but not Coleridge, Shelley, or Keats could have been a tragic hero. Byron, however, is shaped in that mould from which issued forth, more than

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superiority and disdain with which the poets of the time regarded the contemporary theatre and its ragged regiments of melodramatists.

Apart from the major poets of the early nineteenth century there were several *littérateurs* who endeavoured to convince the audiences of their worth and who were successively hailed by the critics as prophets of a new age. Of these Charles Robert Maturin won much transitory fame with his *Bertram* (1816), produced by Kean at the solicitation of Lord Byron and countenanced by Scott. This play, as well as the showy *Manuel* (1817) and *Fredolfo* (1819), is marked by a keen sense of word-beauty, but the excessive sentimentality and pathos introduced into every scene render all these works of minor dramatic importance. So, too, failed Richard Lalor Sheil, who tried to capture the stage by storm, heaping excess upon excess in wild confusion. *Adelaide* (1816) is a typically scened Germanized play which deals with the subject of the French Revolution, and *The Apostate* (1817) is full of grandiloquent passages which occasionally rise to tragic heights, but which more often sink to bathos. Sheil's tendencies are shown in the fact that for his *Evadne, or, The Statue* (1819), he went to the Elizabethan Shirley for his plot. Sometimes this author comes as near as any of his contemporaries to the securing of a truly dramatic note, yet none of his plays, with their admixture of Elizabethan, romantic, and 'Germanic' elements, can make any stir in our hearts to-day.

Henry Hart Milman was another of these. His *Fazio* (1816) was designed as an "attempt at reviving our old national drama with greater simplicity of plot," but it fails in its effort through its rather rambling blank verse and its want of intensity. The plot is a peculiar one, concerned mainly with the alchemist Fazio, in whose house Bartolo, an old miser, dies. The former seizes his bag of gold and then pretends he has found the philosophers' stone. In his newly won riches he pays attention to the Marchesa Aldabella, and his wife, Bianca, in a fit of jealousy declares to the authorities that her husband was the murderer of Bartolo. He is hanged, and she dies of a broken heart.

As is evident, the theme is hardly one fitted for genuine tragic treatment. For the subject-matter of his *Ivan* (1816) William Sotheby went to Russia. This is a poorly wrought drama of palace intrigue and of would-be philosophical sentiment—typical, in its lack of co-ordinated impression of so many tragedies of the time. More effective provec the few tragedies of Mary Russell Mitford, *Julian* (1823) *The Foscari* (1826), and *Rienzi* (1828). All of these posses individuality and a few effective scenes, but again there i nothing new, nothing great, nothing strong

For a time it seemed as though one writer were t succeed in drawing the literary drama out of the genera rut of mediocrity or incompetence, but when we now loo back on the plays of this author—James Sheridan Knowle —we realize that he too had nothing fresh to give to th theatre of his period More than most of his companions, he was prepared to utilize devices rendered popular in the hands of the melodramatists, he had sufficiently lofty ideals of a critical kind to keep him steady in his aim; he had grasped something of the middle-class demands of the contemporary audiences. An examination of his plays, however, shows that, with all this, he had nothing fundamentally novel to present *Virginius* (1820) is merely a *bourgeois* rendering of classic story; *William Tell* (1825) is only a superior melodrama; *The Wife: A Tale of Mantua* (1833) is hopelessly artificial in its romantic fashion, with long-lost loves miraculously revealed in time-honoured fashion. Some interestingly drawn characters he has to give, but these alone cannot lift his plays to a higher plane. He sometimes comes near to fuller achievement, but never is there for him complete success.

The attempts thus made in the first few years of the century were energetically followed by various writers of later decades. Walter Savage Landor, not with much dramatic skill, early essayed tragedy in *Count Julian* (1812), and again, a quarter of a century after, in *Andrea of Hungary* and *Giovanna of Naples* (1839) and in *The Siege of Ancona* (1846). No more significant were the various plays written by his brother, Robert Eyres Landor, whose *The Count*

Arezzi (1824) betrays some of the same kind of confusion as had marred *Count Julian*. Thomas Noon Talfourd came closer to the theatre with his *Ion* (1836), a play hailed by many as the long-awaited drama destined to lead men toward a new world. This work, however, no more than the others may hold our attention now. Talfourd's love of the classics gives it a certain dignity and perhaps a certain grandeur, but the characters are chilly conceived, and the language drags monotonously on, stilted and artificial, leading to soliloquies such as the following:

> *Ion*. Distrust me not.—Benignant Powers, I thank ye !
> [*Exit*.
>
> *Adrastus*. Yet stay—he's gone—his spell is on me yet;
> What have I promised him ? To meet the men
> Who from my living head would strip the crown,
> And sit in judgment on me ?—I must do it—
> Yet shall my band be ready to o'erawe
> The course of liberal speech, and if it rise
> So as too loudly to offend my ear,
> Strike the rash brawler dead !—What idle dream
> Of long-past days had melted me ? It fades—
> It vanishes—I am again a King !

No more ardent vitality could he infuse into romantic themes; his later *Glencoe; or, The Fate of the Macdonalds* (1840), although it travels to the Highlands for its setting and treats of a story of tragic love, presents as lifeless characters and as frigid artificiality.

Variously these literary authors played with their romantic visions, but always they chose plot material either from past ages or from their own imaginative dream-worlds; their blank verse meandered through 'classic' or Shakespearian meadows, but never took on the vividity of pulsating dramatic expression. The great poets no farther than the lesser men of letters advanced the position of the true drama of their time. Thus Robert Browning, who at first might be deemed gifted with just such qualities as befitted a genuine dramatist, failed with the rest. Here, it might have been thought, was one at least who loved not merely to elaborate melodious cadences on which the ear soon surfeits or to persist in dull repetitions of Shakespearian

reaching perfection in this art. His love of the soliloquy which makes the *Dramatis Personæ* such a magnificent series of dramatic lyrics renders his plays somewhat slow in movement. His passion for truth in language, which enabled him to compose verses of a peculiarly concentrated and significant emotional intensity, marred his dialogue; the language of drama must be realistic, but whenever it becomes obscure action at once begins to flag. Nor were his characters dramatically planned. Browning loved the

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Browning's introduction to the world of drama came through a request of Macready's that the young poet of *Paracelsus* should write something for him. *Strafford* was

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is whelmed in a series of conflicting doubts and purposes, grants it back to his father when the latter lies on his death-bed. Polyxena, Charles' wife, is the most interesting figure in the play, a fine portrait of "noble and right woman's-manliness," the expression of Browning's own ideal, and D'Ormea is an able study of a political minister. *The Return of the Druses* is somewhat more melodramatic and seems to go back to earlier romantic sentiment for its inspiration. Here the scene is an island in the Southern Sporades, inhabited by a Syrian race called the Druses. They are under the domination of the Templars. The tragic conflict arises from the fact that, goaded into rebellion by the tyranny of the old Prefect, these Druses accept Djabal as a god reincarnated to free them from oppression, while the mild Loys, an honest member of his order, is striving to release them from bondage. Conflict arises in Loys' mind through his love of Anael, the betrothed of Djabal, and Djabal himself is an interesting study of the born chieftain who, in order to secure his end, pretends to divine attributes. The scene in which Loys discovers Djabal's duplicity is masterly, but once more the drama as a whole is actionless, and obscure phraseology frequently disturbs the treatment of the emotional conflict. *A Blot in the 'Scutcheon* (1843) betrays some of the same features. There are many scenes in it which are dramatically effective, but much of the language is obscure. A poor welcome was given to this play, as also to *Colombe's Birthday* (printed 1844; acted 1853). In this drama one character, that of Valence, stands forward as a majestic figure; but rhetoric again clogs the action. *Luria* and *A Soul's Tragedy* (1846) are, like *Pippa Passes*, written in a form unsuitable for stage production.

Browning, then, failed in this attempt to provide a great drama for his times. So, too, but in different ways, failed Thomas Lovell Beddoes, Charles Jeremiah Wells, and Richard Henry Horne. Beddoes had a true eye for the defects of his age. "The man who is to awaken the drama," he wrote in 1825, "must be a bold, trampling fellow. . . . With the greatest reverence for all the antiquities of the

drama I still think that we had better beget than revive—attempt to give the literature of this age an idiosyncrasy and spirit of its own." This, however, he himself was not capable of doing. In spite of the fact that he did succeed

His *The Bride's Tragedy* (1822) is immature and over-redolent of the Elizabethans. Of a similar type is Charles Jeremiah Wells' single effort, *Joseph and his Brethren*, originally published in 1824 and frequently revised up to 1879. Flashes of lurid light glance through this play, which critics are not far wrong in tracing back to the spirit of Marlowe. The last of this trio is Richard Henry Horne, author of *Cosmo de Medici* (1837), *The Death of Marlowe* (1837), *Gregory VII* (1840), and *Judas Iscariot* (1848). Had these plays been written in 1600 we should probably now esteem them as among the best works of the Elizabethan dramatists, but their spirit is wholly out of touch with the time in which they were written. Majestic conceptions are in them and a rich rush of gorgeous poetry, but they betray the same weakness visible in all the poetic plays of the Romantic period; they give nothing new to the theatre. Fundamentally they are but imitations of the grandeur of earlier dramatic activity.

Considerable space might be given to many other writers of similar poetic plays during the Byron period, but these *may serve as typical of the general productivity.* In nearly every drama there are brilliant scenes, in each there is some beauty of language and occasional flashes of insight [illegible]

We seem to see that here the theatre might have gained a new life, had its doors not been shut to the numerous poets

clamouring for entrance. At the same time, these poets in reality could not have brought to the playhouse anything save old themes treated in a finer way. Romance coloured their lives, and they knew not how to delve below into the sorrows of ordinary existence. What the theatre wanted was the impulse that comes from reality, an impulse that ere long was to proceed from Scandinavia, and the theatre, had it welcomed the poets on to its stage, fostering thus another Elizabethan period, might well have hindered rather than furthered the remarkable revival of dramatic work which characterizes our own period.

CHAPTER III

MELODRAMAS AND FARCES

NONE of the plays noted in the last chapter gave anything new; none met the requirements of the time. More characteristic of the period are the various dramatic romances and melodramas which formed the regular stock-in-trade of the theatres. These may be entirely innocent of literary graces, they may not offer to us much of promise for the future; but they at least had vigour, interest, and vitality. In the works of Home and of Jephson, still more in the bizarre plays of Matthew Gregory ('Monk') Lewis, a general native tendency toward the melodrama may be discerned in the last years of the eighteenth century, but the formal establishment of that type on the London stage unquestionably owes much to Continental, particularly to German, example During the last years of the eighteenth century the influence of France suddenly disappeared, and all eyes were turned to the genius of Northern Europe. For this there were several reasons. Novelty, certainly, was in this change of orientation. The Parisian theatre had been well ran-

dynasty was German.

excesses of the revolutionaries were turning almost all men against her. Above all, Germany had that to provide for which all Europe was craving, a distinctly individual note in the theatre. Lessing had proved himself the only man in Europe with a true idea of what the drama implied, and had already made fresh essays in the domestic tragedy. Goethe had produced his *Götz von Berlichingen*, starting thereby a whole school of medievalism. Schiller had written, in *Die Räuber*, one of the most distinctive of

eighteenth-century plays, and even to Kotzebue, condemned as he is to-day, may be given the credit of establishing in his *Menschenhass und Reue*, his *Falsche Scham* and other similar works, a more pronounced form of *drame* than so far had been attempted. Small wonder was it, then, that the English dramatists turned to these men, and our only regret can be that they did not follow more firmly Lessing's and Schiller's lead. From Germany they took only external things. They seized upon Kotzebue's sentimentalism rather than on Schiller's tragic tone. They misunderstood their originals and made spectacular that which had possessed true elements of greatness.

The earliest adaptation of a German work seems to have been Johnstone's *The Disbanded Officer* (1786), a rendering of Lessing's *Minna von Barnhelm*; within a few years of that date the London bookshops were literally full of translations and adaptations from Lessing, from Kotzebue, from Schiller, from Iffland, from Kratter, from Goethe, and even other lesser and now long-forgotten authors. From Germany, too, more adventurous writers passed to other lands, the first rendering from the Danish appearing in Wilson's *Poverty and Wealth* (1799).

Among these authors three distinct strains of feeling can be traced. The first of these is the sentimentalism marked in the works of Kotzebue, and, akin to this, the deeper humanitarianism of Goethe. The second is the medieval atmosphere as expressed in the latter author's *Götz von Berlichingen*, which was translated by Sir Walter Scott in 1799. The third is the richer dramatic force in Schiller's dramas. It must be admitted that the majority of these translations were reading plays, never actually performed upon the stage, and that their influence was probably greater on the poetic closet drama of England than upon the theatre. At the same time, they aided in moulding and forming all the dramatic literature of the early nineteenth century. Kotzebue laid his spell upon the English playwrights, and taught them how to express new problems. Goethe aided in the development of medievalism, and Schiller gave new types and scenes. The French correct-

ness and the French sentimentalism had gone. Instead of extolling the beauties of the Gallic tongue, the translator of *The Robbers* (1792) could declare that "the French language in point of energy is far inferior to our own tongue, and very far beneath the force of the German." The whirligig of time brought its revenges, and Gothicism reigned in the world of poetry and drama.

This Gothicism reigned because it met with, and found spiritual kinship in, a vague, indeterminate, but nevertheless forceful native tendency which was ultimately leading to the same goal. The spirit of sentimentalism was more serious than comic; it is by no means difficult to see how the sentimentalized hero of Steele's *The Conscious Lovers* is passed on and, subtly transformed, becomes the hero, eager to rescue innocence in distress, of such a play as Morton's *Speed the Plough*, hovering on the borderline of serious comedy and frank melodrama. Easy, too, is it to trace the gradual development from the Grecian palace setting of Home's *The Fatal Discovery* to the dingy caverns, the mouldering graves, and the *rococo* ruined castles of the last years of the eighteenth century. The sentimentalism, the medieval atmosphere, and the bold treatment of unusual themes were all apparent in England before ever Kotzebue and Schiller reached our shores, only, Kotzebue and Schiller had succeeded in making a few paces ahead of the English writers, and so, by their influence and encouragement, hastened on a process already well advanced.

In tracing this movement, besides the formal translations [illegible] we must take [illegible] which, as it [illegible] melodramatists to come. This transitional stage is well enough marked in Sheridan's famous reworking of Kotzebue's *Pizarro* (1799), [illegible]ing as it may be, is designed as [illegible] however, though it may have [illegible] than the others, by no means [illegible] Five years [illegible] (1794) had [illegible] Gothic abbey [illegible]

setting and action placed in the fifteenth century. In this abbey Lamotte, poverty-stricken, has taken refuge. Walking in the wood one day, he hears cries of terror and arrives in time to save Adeline, whom he takes back to his wife. Driven to despair by hunger, he waylays the Marquis of Montault. The latter, visiting the abbey, finds in Lamotte the highwayman who had assaulted him, and forgives him only on condition that he attempts to persuade Adeline to become his mistress. Suddenly, however, this evil Marquis discovers that the maiden is none other than the daughter of his own brother, whom long since he had murdered. His crime is revealed, and he commits suicide. The play has all the trappings dear to the heart of romance—the ancient abbey, the theme of robbery, a ghost in a darkened room, and a long-concealed murder startlingly exposed.

This type of drama continued its successful career throughout the first decades of the nineteenth century. It is impossible here to trace its career in detail; two representative examples only may be selected to present some idea of the general scope of the kind. The first of these is *The Iron Chest* (1796), a popular piece by George Colman the Younger. The source of this work is William Godwin's novel *Caleb Williams*, and it employs liberally a series of exciting and grotesque incidents calculated to capture the attention of a not too exacting audience. Sir Edward Mortimer in this play is head-keeper of the New Forest. Some time previously he has been tried on a charge of murder, but had come from the court acquitted. Wilford learns his secret, and Sir Edward, thinking to get rid of him, accuses him of robbery. Wilford, however, being the hero, is successful in his project, and Sir Edward's guilt is proved by an unlucky document preserved in an iron chest. There is here a typical melodramatic story of concealed crime, including a villain and a distressed hero cut to measure. The other representative piece of the same kind is William Dimond's *The Foundling of the Forest* (1809). Here Baron Longueville is the villain. He loves Geraldine, daughter of De Valmont, and tries, to reach his end, to murder Florian, the foundling. His plot fails; and meanwhile it is discovered

that De Valmont's long-lost wife still lives. Bertrand, Longueville's tool, is smitten with conscience, and through his means it is discovered that Florian is De Valmont's son. Again a common story of criminal purpose and distressed virtue all duly coming right in the end.

the pseudo-classic tragedy is being supplanted by a frank introduction of violent action and exciting episode. Soon the demand for such plays increased, particularly so when the 'minor' theatres of the nineteenth century—that is, those theatres which had sprung up alongside the major,

the stage-directions inform us, with 'solemn,' 'horrid,' or 'lamenting' notes, was brought to play its part in the creation of atmosphere. The 'minor' theatres appealed to a popular audience; their system was the repertory system with constant change of bill; the audiences were con-

... e there was a con-

... le. For their part,

... the pay was small for such pieces and that, if they desired to make a living wage, they had to turn out dozens of plays in the year, and, second, that their way was made the easier for them by the facts that no literary graces were demanded and that action

as style is concerned and an increasing tendency to substitute lengthy stage-direction descriptive of physical action for dialogue expressive of character. Necessarily, as this

tendency developed, there came an increasing cleavage between the superior poetic dramatists and these shamelessly unliterary playwrights.

Thus was the melodrama established, and thus it ran its course during the nineteenth century. Melodramas, however, were not all of one sort. Certain fundamental characteristics are to be discovered in each example of the kind, whether that belongs to 1820 or to 1860; but it is important to observe particularly the development of new themes corresponding to changes of taste in the audiences of the different periods. At the beginning the melodramatic plots were taken either from romantic tales of adventure or from stories of supernatural wonders. They provided, in other words, the crude counterpart of the romantic imaginings which produced, in vastly different spheres of literary creation, such works as *Thalaba*, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, *Isabella*, *The Revolt of Islam*, and *The Corsair*. Men like 'Monk' Lewis early exploited the romantic passion for the other world (as in *The Castle Spectre*, 1798), and were succeeded by a train of worthy followers; others, such as Dimond and the Dibdins, ransacked the Middle Ages for suitable themes; still others, such as William Thomas [illegible] in *The Cataract of the Ganges; or, The Rajah's* [illegible] to the East. Very soon the constant seeking for new plots led these men to the rapidly flourishing world of contemporary fiction. Sir Walter Scott, they discovered, wrote on themes which, if stripped of the strength and beauty of their style, could be adapted easily to melodramatic requirements. Thus in *Rob Roy* they found the stock bandit of sympathetic heart, driven to theft and rapine by the oppression of the great; they found there a hero in young Osbaldistone; they found a graceful heroine (with the usual secret) in Diana Vernon and a thorough villain in Rashleigh Osbaldistone. Since there was no dramatic copyright in those days, the melodramatists were free to use this heaven-sent material as much as they desired. Hearts of Midlothian throbbed on every stage.

Partly through this delving into the world of fiction,

partly because of changing tastes in the age, an alteration in the choice of melodramatic themes becomes apparent during the thirties and forties of the century. Having ransacked Scott, the 'minor' playwrights quite naturally looked back to the fiction-writers of the preceding years. They tried their hand at Fielding and Smollett, and discovered in Defoe an author who, because of his love of action, well suited their purposes. But when one of them had turned, say, *Moll Flanders* into a play, and when others followed with kindred picaresque themes (such as B. N. Webster with his *Paul Clifford, the Highwayman of 1770* (1832)) it was found that a nearer approach toward contemporary life appeared here than in the romantic or bizarre [illegible] se the way was paved [illegible] 'naturalistic' melo- [illegible] mpetus through the [illegible] hese, full of action, [illegible] e avidly seized on. [illegible] y came wet from the [illegible] to see depicted before them, in the now time-honoured melodramatic way, scenes of a familiar cast; they sobbed over little Nell and outrageously hissed poor Scrooge, discovering a novel and added excitement because little Nell was nearer to them than a shadowy Adeline and Scrooge a more potent villain than a nebulous Marquis of Montault.

From this it was but a st[illegible] of all kinds of life—mostly [illegible] spectators. Usually—for action and thrill were demanded as essentials—the themes had some background of crime, war, or rebellion, and, as the century advanced, more and [illegible]

introduction of this domestic melodrama, allied to the

effects produced by the truly epoch-making Theatre Act of 1843, soon brought something new. When the minor dramatists turned from the Middle Ages, the East, and the realm of the supernatural to the common themes of daily existence, quite naturally they began to lose some of their artificiality of style and proceeded to think of ways suited for the securing of naturalistic impressions. Sometimes they seemed unable to imagine any means better than the introduction on the stage of familiar objects—street-lamps, hansom-cabs, and later, actual weapons used for their crimes by the criminals who were chosen as the protagonists of their plays; but gradually an appreciation of subtler methods dawned on their minds, and their technique was improved. Fuller 'realism,' of course, could not be developed out of the melodramatic style, but in these plays a step at least was being taken toward the dramatists of 1890–1920. The importance of this preliminary work must not be minimized, and, even although we may recognize that realism cannot lead to high artistry, we may welcome this movement toward a naturalistic stage after the long-enduring excesses of the romantic generations and the chill rhetoric of the literary drama. This movement toward a more natural mode of expression was the direct result of developments within the melodramatic form, but it was aided considerably by the theatrical changes which followed the Act of 1843. Immediately, perhaps, no fundamental consequence of this Act is to be traced; for a time theatres seemed to continue on the time-honoured paths; but eventually the breaking down of the strict cleavage between major and minor playhouses came to have clearly distinguishable influence. The melodramas took on a more literary quality, and the literary drama tended to become more popular.

The melodramatic works of such men as Tom Taylor and Charles Reade thus possess a strength lacking in earlier examples of this kind. Sometimes, it is true—for example in *Two Loves and a Life* (1854), written by these two authors in collaboration—they might choose themes of a romantic sort; this drama thus deals with the rising of 1745 and shows how Ruth, having aided the Duke of Cumberland,

succeeds in saving the unfortunate hero, Gervase, from execution. Most characteristic, however, of their style are

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Captain"

ave *Man*

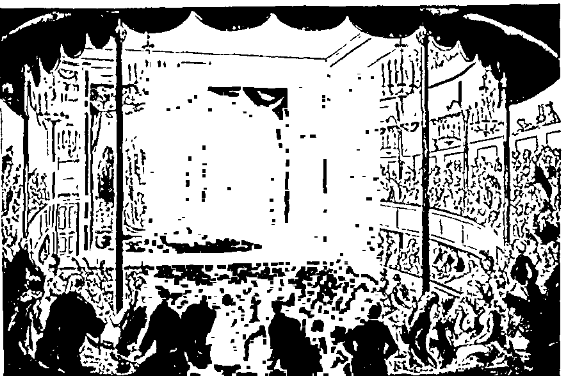
(1863) is a pure detective drama which traces the fortunes of poor Brierly, who is nearly engulfed in disaster through the threats of his former associates. Even Henry Arthur Jones could patronize this form, and in *The Silver King* (1882) produce a melodrama which, in spite of many artificialities, has an absorbing interest and a genuine vitality.

While the melodrama thus pursued an independent course, various developments are to be observed from about the year 1840 onward, tending toward a corresponding popularization of the literary form. Already in 1838 Lord Lytton had brought *The Lady of Lyons* before the public, and in 1841 appeared Dion Boucicault's *London Assurance*. Each of these is important in its own way. Through Lytton's effort the *littérateurs* were taught how to make their works more suited for ordinary consumption. *The Lady of Lyons* is a 'literary' play in one sense of the phrase, but its story has the true melodramatic tinge, and most traces of stylistic affectation have vanished. Lytton's later comedy of *Money* (1840) is even more positive in its significance. Here a theme of genuine immediate interest has been chosen. The

efforts, in which his genuine sense of humour is ably allied

to his appreciation of theatric thrill, were quite justifiab esteemed in his own time. *The Colleen Bawn* (1859 *Arrah-na-Pogue; or, The Wicklow Wedding* (1864), *Th Shaughraun* (1874), *The O'Dowd* (1873), and *Cuish-ma-Chre* (1887) may merit some of William Archer's condemnation but they still possess a vitality of their own.

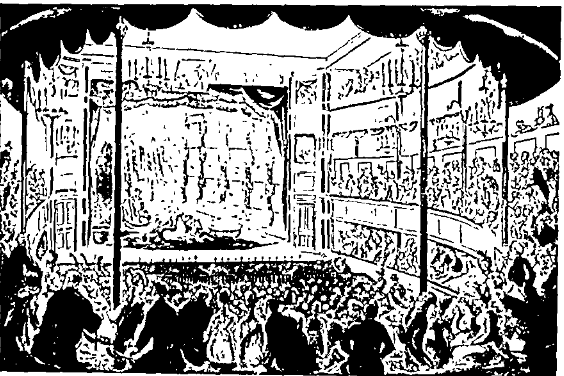
While these movements were in progress in the spheres of melodrama and of sentimental comedy, the purely comic theatre, save for one exception, continued to languish. Vapid comic opera and stupid farce for the most part held the boards. The audiences could not appreciate fine wit; rude, primitive, and often coarse physical action took the place of flashing epigram and dazzling metaphor. The exception, however, is important. The early nineteenth-century audiences were not always ignorant of the essential foolishness of the spectacles in which they took delight, and alongside of extravagant melodrama flourished the burlesque. This burlesque in itself has not provided the theatre with any great masterpieces; the innumerable travesties of *Hamlet* or of contemporary serious dramas are mostly dull and monotonous, while even the more fantastic experiments in this *genre* of men like Robert Brough are lacking in genuine brilliance; yet this burlesque contributed in its own way to the development of a form of play essentially characteristic of the age and destined to aid in the later development of the theatre. To this form of play is usually given the name 'extravaganza,' and for its popularization in England we have to thank chiefly the prolific James Robinson Planché. Planché started his career with *Amoroso, King of Little Britain*, in 1818 and continued writing until the second half of the century. His extravaganzas abound in puns; his style is sometimes crude; his ideas are often weak and trivial—but one thing he did achieve. He showed how the romantic love of the wonderful could be turned from an impossible Orientalism and from medieval atmosphere of ridiculous proportions to a sphere genuine creativeness. The imaginative quality of the fairy-tale joins in his work with the light touch of burlesque and satire. *Olympic Revels; or, Prometheus and Pandora*



A Water Melodrama at Sadler's Wells

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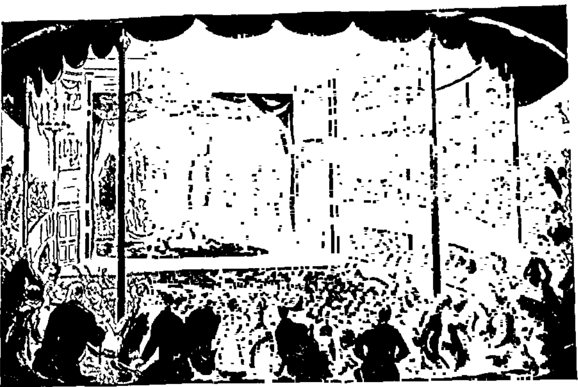
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A Water Melodrama at Sadler's Wells

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(1831), with its clever mingling of spectacularism, delicate topical allusions ... of classical legend, might well

'vulgar' garments as might be, whereas he demanded for ... 'historically accurate' ... rd might, indeed, be ... ie introduced delicacy and refinement into a dramatic form which before had been but coarsely crude.

cultivated it enthusiastically in the seventies. Its chief importance rests in the fact that the extravaganza proved the basis for the writings of W. S. Gilbert.

So far, wheresoever we look, we find nothing of immediate and paramount importance. The poetic drama is dull and

rely on cheap effects and trivial dialogue; the comedies and farces are vulgar and foolish; even the extravaganza, although it has creative force, does not give us anything of permanent value. In the fifties of the century the stage indeed seemed to have reached a low ebb, yet now, looking back, we are able to discern, in the work of Planché, in that of Lytton and Boucicault, and even in that of the minor

...mation of popular and literary elements than had hitherto been achieved. For these the way was being prepared in the decades from 1860 to 1890.

PART VI
THE BEGINNINGS OF DRAMATIC REVIVAL (1860–90)

CHAPTER I

CHANGE OF THEATRE, AUDIENCE, AND TONE; IBSEN

Theatrical Conditions

IN the year 1873 a reviewer in the *Westminster*, as H. A. Jones has noted, thought that the drama in England was a defunct art, yet already many steps had been taken toward that revival which, later caught up and elaborated, led to the triumphs of the modern theatre. It is, of course, impossible in the space of this volume to indicate the gradual stages which led to the establishment of the new comedy and of the new tragedy, or to indicate other than briefly the relationship of the English stage of the time to the stages in other countries. For that a survey decade by decade would have been required, so that we might be able to compare, for example, the typical pieces produced in England contemporaneously with such works as Dumas's *Demi-Monde* in the fifties and such as Meilhac and Halévy's *Frou-Frou* in the sixties. All that can be done here is to observe some of the major tendencies, noting, in spite of the rapid advance of the theatre when we compare it with the theatre of the eighteenth century, the comparative slowness of progress in England. In this respect Victorian England was in somewhat the same position as Elizabethan England. When Marlowe came to write *Tamburlaine* the Italians and the French had already achieved much in the theatre; when Robertson produced *Society* Dumas and Augier had already established themselves; and when the dramatists of the nineties took control Ibsen had made himself an international force.

In order to understand the material conditions operating on the dramatists, we must turn back once more to that which was the most notable theatrical event of the nineteenth century—the Act of 1843 "for regulating" theatres, by which the monopoly of the two patent houses, Covent Garden and Drury Lane, was destroyed, and the way was kept open for the arising of new houses. This Act was partly the result of the gradual financial degeneration of the two larger theatres, for Drury Lane had sunk to such depths that resort was made to shilling concerts in an effort to restore solvency, while Covent Garden had been converted into an opera house; but if the Act was the result partly of the financial condition of the theatres it was none the less dictated largely by a general desire on the part of actors and public to escape from that vastness of structure which had appeared so just and desirable at the close of the eighteenth century. With this legislation of 1843 new theatres could raise their heads in the Metropolis without fear of suppression, and new efforts could be made for the rejuvenation of the playhouse. It is true that at first small signs of alteration are noticeable as we trace the fortunes of the playhouses and of drama in the middle of the nineteenth century. Indeed, for the decades immediately following the date when the Act was passed through Parliament we might imagine that there was even an increase of melodramatic and spectacular pieces. Men were slow to realize the possibilities of the new *régime*, and so far no inspiration had come to them by which they could rear a new dramatic structure. Gradually, however, the benefits of the alteration in theatrical orientation made their appearance. The smaller theatres that arose to take the place erstwhile occupied by Covent Garden and Drury Lane permitted of the better appreciation of both tragedy and comedy. Actors no longer were forced, as in the larger playhouses, to mouth it grandiloquently, but were enabled to develop subtler and more delicate styles of performance.

To these smaller theatres came, too, a slightly changed audience. Life was not so dissolute as it had been in the early nineteenth century, and Queen Victoria was setting

a more sober tone in Court circles. No longer now were the theatres the chosen home of gamblers, rakes, and prostitutes. The middle classes, honest and quiet-minded, came to witness plays in security, unoffended by coarse conversation round them or by missiles playfully flung at spectator or actor. The theatres became more and more houses of artistic endeavour. Perhaps the managers failed often to secure any artistic perfection, but the basis was there for that perfection, as it had not been in the early nineteenth century. With this arising of many new theatres, moreover, it was natural that dramatic styles should come to be associated with particular houses. In the earlier days everything, comedy, tragedy, farce, melodrama, comic opera, extravaganza, burlesque, was mixed up in the two theatres; now, if one theatre specialized in comic opera another could devote itself to more serious drama. This in itself meant that more evenings could be devoted to the higher forms of dramatic literature than was at all possible in the year 1810.

Two movements, on the other hand, militated against this system producing the best dramatic work. The first of these, and the most important, was the habit of the long run. Up to the middle of the eighteenth century and even into the nineteenth century runs of any length were unknown. A run of nine nights constituted a record in the early seventeenth century, and the month's performance of *The Beggar's Opera* in 1728 was regarded as extraordinary. With the coming of new conditions, however, runs became necessary if the managers were not to go bankrupt, and we find the length of these series of performances growing in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries from weeks to months, until in our own days we look with calm complacency at bills which inform us that this or that piece has run successfully for so many years. In this we are partly suffering for the sins of our fathers, partly we are paying the penalty of a London grown so huge that it is not a town, but a world in itself. The second movement is that wherein the management and ownership of the theatres are affected. When the two houses of Drury

Lane and Covent Garden had the *monopoly* the patents were vested in the hands of one man or of a group of men who engaged managers to undertake the control of the theatres. When the new theatres were built, on the other

managers or to various companies which gathered together from time to time. Still worse, they were sub-let and sub-sub-let, so that the expenses for the person actually producing the plays rose to a height out of all proportion to what might have been expected. Actor-managers were and are, thus hampered in their work, and the old stocl companies which had done such good all-round work i the eighteenth century virtually disappeared. Apart fron the "Old Vic" and Sadler's Wells, the repertory system ii our own times is firmly established only in certain mor adventurous provincial towns, although on the Continen it is still retained and aids there in the production of gooc drama.

With this happy event of the liberty of the theatres anc the consequent gradual change in the audience must b noted the growth of a new criticism. Instead of the meta physical meanderings of Coleridge or the sometimes over

romantic fervour true and false, required in order that i might rise to some new plane. On the one hand, we not the studies of men like Moulton, who endeavoured t

speare's Globe Theatre, and to realize that the theatre a

a whole had advanced steadily and logically from medieval times. This led to many consequences. It aided the rising school of dramatists to evolve a new technique. They were able to see why such and such a convention should have been, and why it should now be abandoned. So, too, they were given the materials on which they could base a fresh dramatic theory. Studying Shakespeare in relation to his time and to the conditions under which he worked, they could see more clearly what things in his work presented a message to the modern period, what belonged decisively to his own age and could offer no suggestions to men of their time. Besides this, the antiquarian researches into the form of the medieval and Elizabethan theatres gave new ideas to the actor-managers. They were enabled to secure a fresh orientation, and though the heavily decorated set-pieces of the Lyceum management were most characteristic of this period, soon the question of rich stage decoration *versus* simplicity came to be put, and men began to wonder whether after all the drama was not most effective when the stage was a bare platform and when the imagination of the spectators was called upon to create visions of leafy forests and palace towers and gloomy dungeons. This question, and questions of a similar nature, gradually led to new endeavours on the part of producers. In the preceding years the manager could think of nothing better than the production of finer, more gorgeous, and more realistic scenery than had been seen before; now he was faced with new worlds, with new ideas, with infinite possibilities of experiment and improvement.

(ii) Henrik Ibsen and other Continental Dramatists

It is evident that the ground was being prepared for the appearance of a fresh literary technique, but no man in England seemed capable of evolving fully the conventions which would harmonize with modern conditions. Possibly such a man might have been forthcoming, but the work of any hypothetical reformer of this sort was anticipated by the

attempt is made to pen chronicle history. *Lady Inger of Ostråt*, in spite of the bewildering complexity of the plot, already reveals the presence of a creative master-mind. The dramatic irony of the work is skilfully planned. Lady Inger murders a man, hoping to save her son; her victim turns out to be that very son. Eline is engaged to Nils Lykke; Lykke is found to be the hated betrayer of her sister. From these historical or pseudo-historical themes Ibsen turned to domestic subjects, writing on questions of the present day, exposing in his own stern manner the problems he could see round him everywhere, revealing with sure touch the very innermost of human emotions. *An Enemy of the People* (1882), *The Wild Duck* (1884), and *Ghosts* (1881) are of this class. The first deals with the fate of the benevolent and idealistic Dr Stockmann, who in his zeal becomes the chief object of the people's hatred. It is not a great play, perhaps, but the sure dramatic touches, such as the bringing over of Stockmann's wife in Act III and the ejaculations of the drunken man in Act IV, show what a powerful dramatic artistry Ibsen possessed.

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In Ibsen, then, the world found a master-mind, one

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appearance in the north of Europe of Henrik Ibsen, destined to become the greatest force in the revival of the present-day theatre. Ibsen started his career as an historical and symbolically fanciful playwright. *Lady Inger of Ostråt* (1855) is typical of a number of other dramas in which appeal is directed to national sentiments and in which an attempt is made to pen chronicle history. *Lady Inger of Ostråt*, in spite of the bewildering complexity of the plot, already reveals the presence of a creative master-mind. The dramatic irony of the work is skilfully planned. Lady Inger murders a man, hoping to save her son; her victim turns out to be that very son. Eline is engaged to Nils Lykke; Lykke is found to be the hated betrayer of her sister. From these historical or pseudo-historical themes Ibsen turned to domestic subjects, writing on questions of the present day, exposing in his own stern manner the problems he could see round him everywhere, revealing with sure touch the very innermost of human emotions. *An Enemy of the People* (1882), *The Wild Duck* (1884), and *Ghosts* (1881) are of this class. The first deals with the fate of the benevolent and idealistic Dr Stockmann, who in his zeal becomes the chief object of the people's hatred. It is not a great play, perhaps, but the sure dramatic touches, such as the bringing over of Stockmann's wife in Act III and the ejaculations of the drunken man in Act IV, show what a powerful dramatic artistry Ibsen possessed. In *The Wild Duck* the plot is more subtle and complicated, and Ibsen appears to be delving into the inner reaches of the soul. The character of Hedvig gradually takes concrete shape before us, as do those of the honest Hjalmar and the younger Werle. The symbolism of *The Wild Duck* and its pervasive delicacy may be taken as typical of part of Ibsen's work. The sterner side of his nature is revealed in *Ghosts*. In this drama Ibsen wrote his masterpiece. Nowhere has he so succeeded in revealing at once the problem and the reflection of that problem upon the souls of his characters; [illegible] d [illegible]

In Ibsen, then, the world found a master-mind, one

of these few *Übermenschen* beloved by Carlyle and by Nietzsche. It is not, however, merely Ibsen's intellectual greatness which makes him occupy his pre-eminent position; it is the fact that his mind was of a sufficient breadth to make for himself his own dramatic world. In consideration of the influence which he exerted on the English dramatists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries it may be well here briefly to indicate the chief points wherein he opened up new paths to his followers.

In the first place, his drama is a domestic drama. Of the old impossible heroics and pathos of the romantic melodrama he knows nothing. His aim is to dramatize the life of his own day. He realized perfectly that the long-antiquated emotions of the spectacular plays had nothing in common with ordinary men and women; that the drama, if it was to rise to its pristine greatness, would have to adapt itself to the needs of the present, be a mirror of the age, and, instead of escaping into romantic fripperies, make itself the stern monitor of the time. In this, as has been seen, Ibsen was anticipated by Heywood in the seventeenth century and by Lillo in the eighteenth, but neithe of these had attempted to reveal the fundamental problem of social life. Ibsen wove together the tragedy of th individual soul with the tremendous forces which mov in social life like some blind destiny searing and destroy ing, mankind in their disastrous path seeming no mor than an insect fluttering ineffectually against the might barriers which loom up against it. In Ibsen we have nc merely domestic tragedy, but social tragedy, the forces c life forming dominating *dramatis personæ* who move unsee across the stage and raise the whole work to the level c the greatest tragic passion.

Nor was this the only thing which Ibsen brought to th theatre. With the treatment of domestic scene and c social problems he introduced a new frankness, whic at first grated harshly on the ears of prudish Victorian accustomed to the pleasing commonplaces of Tennysonia melody. Here they found a man who dared to speak c things they deemed unspeakable, who laid bare the mos

festering sores in the body social, who flinched from nothing in his Olympian grandeur. Soon their detestation of this frankness began to wane. *Ghosts*, which had been banned by a prurient censorship, was later permitted on the stage, and native writers began to attempt imitations of the Ibsen style. This frankness meant [illegible] for the dramatists. Not only [illegible] to domestic themes, they cou[illegible] life which before had been sternly closed to them; and in dealing with those aspects of social life came to them new ideas and new conceptions of the meaning of the universe.

With this truly epoch-making change in subject-matter and in treatment Ibsen introduced a new technique. He saw that many of the conventions of early nineteenth-century drama were long outworn; he saw that the new theatre demanded a new artistry, and endeavoured to lay the foundations of that artistry. Not only, therefore, did he make of his plays coherent unities, he made them more natural and impressive [illegible]

[illegible] a dramatist knows [illegible] can make an evil character hiss out his hate or speak his thoughts openly to pit and gallery he will not take such care over his ordinary stage dialogue as he would had these conventions been debarred to him. The change in technique, therefore, led not only to the [illegible] ay of [illegible] to an

[illegible] aspect of Ibsen's greatness, but it is one which he shares with the modern theatre in general. The late Professor Vaughan, in his illuminating *Types of Tragic Drama*, saw clearly that the tendency of dramatic development has been consistently from the less to the more inward; as we watch the progress of tragedy from Æschylus to Shakespeare, from Shakespeare to the [illegible] of the present day, we can witness increasing efforts on the part of the playwrights to subordinate action [illegible]

Ibsen, representative in his own age of this movement, showed to his contemporaries many methods of securing this inwardness. Already Browning had subordinated action to development of character, but somehow he failed to make the latter sufficiently interesting. Ibsen, by a series of delicate theatrical touches, keeps our attention awake for the appreciation of a drama which is fundamentally static. Nothing really happens in *Ghosts*; the action is more psychological than physical in *A Doll's House* (1879) and in *The Wild Duck*. No effort is made to charm an audience by a set of exciting incidents; rather are we invited into a quiet room and asked to watch the characters there, watch the expression of their sorrows and joys, and through those sorrows and joys reach to some understanding of their inner selves. The word 'soul' is an awkward one, and the word 'subconscious self' still more awkward; but, using those words with care, we may say that Ibsen strives to show to us, through this expression of ordinary joys and sorrows, ordinary love and hate, ordinary exaltation and despair, the souls or subconscious selves of his *dramatis personæ*. He brings the theatre into line with the added subtlety and delicacy of the time.

In dealing with Ibsen's influence in England it must, of course, be confessed that that influence was in the early period (up to 1890) by no means far-reaching. Already it has been indicated that, on his first introduction to this country, his works were greeted with a chorus of detestation. For most he was

> a dramatist who, apart from the non-construction of his alleged plays, deliberately selects his subjects from the most sordid, abject, even the most revolting corners of human life, relieving the crushing effect of their hideous monotony only by a mechanical, joyless mirth like the crackling of thorns.

Still, there were those who, like William Archer and Sir Edmund Gosse, defended his work in critical prose and others who endeavoured to bring his plays to the notice of a theatrical public. These tentative efforts gradually produced their effect, and, even although Mr J. T. Grein's Independent Theatre performances earned mighty abuse

between 1891 and 1897, they showed themselves not merely the following of earlier experiments; it was through the Independent Theatre Society that Mr G. B. Shaw made his first bow before a London audience.

Ibsen, of course, does not stand forward as the only Continental dramatist who taught these things to English writers, but he is the chief and most important figure. Others besides him took up the tale. In Germany Frederick Hebbel had been similarly striving to express something of his hard conception of life and his heavily hammered-out diagnosis of men's souls, now by means of Biblical dramas such as *Judith* (1841) and *Herodes und Mariamne* (1850), now by means of legendary themes such as *Gyges und sein Ring* (1856) and *Die Nibelungen* (1862), now by [illegible]

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ring to see the beautiful wife of Kandaules. The conflicting passions of Gyges, the strangely heroic yet weak figure of Kandaules, the proud and vengeful Rhodope, are all presented before us magnificently in a series of symbolic scenes whereby the inner emotions are suggested rather than enunciated. In *Maria Magdalena* we have, too, a powerful domestic tragedy. Clara, the heroine, is about to have a child by Leonard, who casts her off on hearing that her brother Karl is arrested as a thief. This arrest kills the mother, and the father, stern in his pride, threatens to kill himself if Clara brings shame on him. A Secretary, who is in love with Clara, kills and is killed by Leonard, and Clara drowns herself. The story is a sordid one, but is raised above the lower levels of sordid *bourgeois* drama by the penetrating insight into character and by the sense of fate which is introduced into several of the scenes. Clara's cry, "O God in heaven, I would have pity if I were thou and thou wert I," and the old father's last words, "I don't understand the world any more," seem wrapped in a mystic significance when they are related to the development of the play.

The kindlier and more humane Norwegian Björnstjerne

Björnson too now added his weight to the growth of the domestic drama and the new technique. Like Ibsen, he started with a series of historical plays, including *King Sverre* (1861), *Sigurd the Bad* (1862), and *Mary Stuart in Scotland* (1864), but passed from that to serious domestic comedy in *The Newly Married Couple* (1865), *Leonarda* (1879), and *A Gauntlet* (1883). Björnson's work is interesting as showing the development in one writer of the new technique. He starts with the older conventions, including soliloquy and aside, and passes into the freer domain already occupied by Ibsen. All his social dramas present a problem. *The Newly Married Couple* strives to delineate the soul of a young man, Axel, eager to make his own way in the world, and the gradual awakening of love in the heart of his wife Laura. It is certainly true that Axel is always preaching on one set subject, and so becomes rather the exponent of a particular view of life than a natural character, but the dangerous estrangement of wife and husband, as well as the difficult portrait of Mathilde, is ably handled. In *Leonarda* the problem is that of the mother who falls in love with her daughter's *fiancé*, but once more the inner beings of the *dramatis personæ* raise the drama above the levels of the mere problem play. Björnson's triumph is *A Gauntlet*. The theme is more serious than that of the others, but ends on a fairly hopeful note. Had Ibsen dealt with the theme he would almost certainly have made it a tragedy. In this play the author is fighting against the blindness and hypocrisy which characterized his own land no less than Victorian England. Svava is a child of the new age; Alfred and the Christensens are denizens of the land of unimaginative and unintelligent hypocrisy. Nowhere has Björnson so succeeded in revealing character, so succeeded in presenting a problem in all its various and widely ramifying aspects.

The new style, too, found many exponents in France. Already in the fifties and the sixties of the century, as has been seen, Dumas, Augier, and Halévy had been experimenting in new forms of the domestic drama, and the movement inaugurated by them gained a fresh impetus when Ibsen's influence began to be felt in Paris. The Théâtre

Théâtre Libre grew the plays of men such as François de Curel, Eugène Brieux, and Georges Ancey.

Nor did this movement stop with the passing of Ibsen. In Sweden August Strindberg had grasped all there was of strength in the new forms and had carried that along new lines. His most important plays—*There are Crimes and Crimes* (1899), [illegible] although *The* [illegible] produced befo[illegible] penetrated, coming back here by way of translation. Anton Tchechov in Russia gave to it added subtlety in *The Seagull* (1896) and in *Uncle Vanya* (1897). Tchechov is more [illegible] with mental [illegible] o less than [illegible] the fact of sex brings to life; Tchechov deals with mental disappointments, with literary ambitions, and with artistic failures. [illegible] the *littérateur* or of the [illegible] of the unsuccessful. [illegible] cter is Uncle Vanya [illegible] is have been dulled and atrophied, and who, on the promise of success in love, is dashed back again to mediocrity. Trigorin in *The Seagull* is a powerful portrait of the unsuccessful visionary, a portrait made all the more striking by the contrast it presents to the boring but worldly successful doctor. A similar study of the failure in life appears in *The Swan Song* (1889), this time, however, in age and regret, not in disappointed youth. The old man, tragedian at heart, and murdered by the plaudits of the crowd over his clownish play, is a powerful variation on his chosen theme.

In Russia the same tendency led toward the sombre plays of Count Tolstoi—*The Power of Darkness* (1886) and *The*

Live Corpse (1912)—and Maxim Gorky's studies of the underworld in *The Lower Depths* (1902). Everywhere, however, similar developments have manifested themselves, and with the growth of new dramatists in diverse lands the task of tracing influences becomes increasingly difficult. It is not, however, hard to see in Ibsen the master-force which, if it did not create, released the powers which went to shape the modern theatre.

While this realistic movement passed from strength to strength, it was but natural that there should be some kind of reaction. This reaction was due partly to an artistic dissatisfaction with the naturalistic method, partly it was due to the tendency which is revealed most clearly in 'impressionism,' the desire to escape from the sordid which is the real. It may be well to consider the various manifestations of an impressionistic kind later; here be it sufficient to note that in England the forms assumed by the plays of M. Maurice Maeterlinck and of Herr Gerhard Hauptmann were supplanted by a revival merely of romantic sentiment. Abroad Maeterlinck might attempt a new medium of expression in *La princesse Maleine* (1889), *Les aveugles* (1890), and *Pelléas et Mélisande* (1892), and Hauptmann might experiment with *Die versunkene Glocke* (1896), as well as with his naturalistic *Vor Sonnenaufgang* (1889) and *Die Weber* (1892); in England the desires which inspired these writers led only to the Lyceum revivals of Shakespeare and the Tennysonian tragedies.

CHAPTER II

T. W. ROBERTSON AND THE DOMESTIC DRAMA

THE influence of Ibsen is all-important in the dramatic revival of the last years of the nineteenth century, but it must not be forgotten that already before 1860 various manifestations of theatrical art had indicated that the English drama was moving in the direction afterward so brilliantly indicated by him, and that considerably before he was first introduced to audiences in this country the new movement had made its definite appearance. Already in 1865 there were distinct signs of an awakening when T. W. Robertson produced his first important comedy, *Society*; London had to wait eight years after that before Sir Edmund [illegible] *Fortnightly Review*, [illegible] rliest translations [illegible]

Any account that traces the course of modern drama [illegible] he kept [illegible] list of [illegible] actual [illegible], *noted* in 1882, Robertson's endeavour to make us bring "our fireside concerns to the theatre with us" must lead toward a stressing of the serious rather than of the comic. To-day *Robertson is regarded as out of date, and certainly when* we read or witness *Society* (1865), or *Ours* (1866), or *Caste* (1867), or any of the other half-dozen of Robertson's laconically titled comedies we must feel that we have long passed *the stage of gentle satire and of delicate emotionalism which* breathes in every one of them. There are in Robertson's plays still some of the old trammels of romantic melodrama. The highborn George D'Alroy is by way of being a sentimental hero, and his marriage with Esther Eccles is wrapped in a veil of somewhat unreal sentimentalism. For all that,

Robertson cut adrift from the prevailing atmosphere of his age. He deliberately returned to real life, depicting in his dramas the aristocratic foibles, the follies and vulgarities of the *nouveaux riches*, the vulgarities, different in type but none the less blatant, of the proletariat, and the careless absurdities of those he knew so well, the Bohemians of London. All of these are depicted in the spirit of satire. The loudness of the profiteer, Mr Chodd, in *Society* is no more attacked than the meanness and soullessness of Lady Ptarmigant; the brutality of Eccles in *Caste* is not more bitterly exposed than the thoughtlessness of Captain Hawtree and the thoroughly obnoxious pretensions of the Marquise. Robertson has no particular axe to grind in these plays, for he is no revolutionary. His creed is essentially Victorian; he never tires of informing us that East is East and West is West, that classes never should mingle, that the working man should learn to stay in his appointed place and the *bourgeoisie* have no yearnings to intrude into the often impoverished drawing-rooms and libraries of Aristocrat Castle. In this way Robertson's teaching must have been entirely in accord with the sentiments of the larger moiety of his audience; but his satire is none the less present, and he faces, if in no very profound manner, the social problems of his day. It is not what Robertson did that makes him a forerunner of modern drama, but his tentative methods of looking at life. Earlier Victorians were content to leave life out of the theatre, or at best to display there only the thrilling events of a disastrous or criminal kind. The rumbling growl of proletarian anger they were pleased to forget in witnessing the romantic adventures of a distressed heroine and a noble hero in some medieval surroundings. Robertson showed men that ordinary life could be brought into the theatre for the good both of drama and of spectators; that the problems of social existence were clamouring for expression in literary form. In style, too, Robertson struck a new note. A performance of *Caste* at the present day may seem at times somewhat stilted. There are occasional lapses into an artificiality of dialogue which savours of eighteenth-century senti-

mentalism, but for the most part the language is free and natural. Our feelings of dissatisfaction arise only from the fact that we have improved still further on Robertson's style. We have ransacked the provincial dialects of England and Ireland, we have studied subtly the possibilities of Cockney speech and the speech of lower middle-class suburbia, for the purposes of the theatre; and we have evolved a form of dramatic dialogue which is absolutely natural. It was Robertson who pointed the way toward the consummation; the naturalism of his stage conversations comes as a welcome relief after the impossible vaporizings of impossible characters in the romantic melodrama and lifeless comedy of preceding years.

Robertson himself did not carry his work very far; sentimentalism ever stayed his hand; and the majority of his immediate successors and of his contemporaries refused to move very far from the even path he had trodden out for himself. Most of the dramatists of the time were men like H. J. Byron, anxious only to secure an immediate stage success, daring never to leave the beaten track. In *Cyril's Success* (1868) Byron tried to write a problem drama, but his treatment is absurdly sentimental. His story of Cyril Cuthbert, led astray by literary success and eventually reconciled to his wife, is conceived in hopelessly artificial terms. Only a slight advance is marked in his later *Married in Haste* (1876), where the difficulties that arise from too hasty marriage and from the artistic jealousy of husband and wife are taken as the main theme of the play. Joseph Knight's criticism of his drama is just and aptly hits off the impression made by scores of similar works: "When first heard . . . it leaves the impression of being a clever and almost a good play. Reflection is required before we perceive that the story is artificial and improbable as well as flimsy"—only nowadays the reflective impression comes more rapidly than it did in Knight's time.

Sentimentalism ruled (
famed *Two Roses* (187
Grundy, who to the last
the newer school, persisted long in turning out plays of an

impossible virtue. *A Pair of Spectacles* (1890), taken from *Les petits oiseaux* of Labiche and Delacour, is a rather foolish commentary on social life; *A Fool's Paradise* (1892) might have been made into a genuine domestic tragedy, but to Grundy the weak the tragic spirit was denied; *Sowing the Wind* (1893) deals with the problem of the illegitimate child, but so delicately and in such refined strain that it could produce no possible effect. Grundy's softness and prettiness are exemplified fully in *A Bunch of Violets* (1894), the very title of this play being symbolic of his achievement. Beautiful maidens smiling through distress and discovering in final acts that they are really heiresses—the spirit of *Home Chat* and *Peg's Paper*—these are what appealed to Grundy.

Grundy has been dealt with here because his dramatic work indicates for how long this sentimental style endured. Already, however, the new movement was well under weigh. Two young men in particular had already started their careers, and although neither could claim to have produced anything by 1890 of outstanding importance, each showed that he had in him the qualities which make for eminence. The first was an actor named Arthur Wing Pinero, who at the age of twenty-two first appeared as a dramatist with a light piece, *£200 a Year* (1877). For a time he occupied himself with farces and trivial comedies, but even in *The Squire* (1881) William Archer, ably discerning, had found evidence of the existence of a "thoughtful and conscientious writer with artistic aims." In *Sweet Lavender* (1888) it might have appeared that he was bent only on following in Grundy's footsteps; to one critic at least it seemed that he had given "an admirable retort witty to the disciples of Zola and *naturalisme* who think a play cannot be healthy without being insipid." Immediately before this, however, Sir Arthur (then Mr) Pinero had shown a power and a skill in light comedy (*The Magistrate*, 1885, *The Schoolmistress*, 1886, and *Dandy Dick*, 1887) which indicated an independent and talented mind, so that one need not be surprised to find *Sweet Lavender* fo[illegible] *The We*[illegible] (1888). *The Weaker Sex* deal[illegible] [illegible]lem [illegible]

from the past. The main story tells how Philip Lyster, having quarrelled with Lady Vivash, had left her to go to America. There he has made a name for himself as Ira Lee. Returning, he falls in love with Lady Vivash's daughter, Sylvia. In the end, realizing the hopelessness of the position, he departs from both their lives. There is certainly nothing very startling here, and the satire directed at women who profess the way political seems hopelessly inept and stupid; but the tone is firmer than in any of Sir Arthur Pinero's earlier works. This was followed by *The Profligate* (1889), in which a darker theme is chosen, and that in turn paved the way for *The Second Mrs Tanqueray* (1893).

Henry Arthur Jones made his *début* one year after that of Sir Arthur Pinero, with *Only round the Corner*, in 1878. His first efforts were sentimental and melodramatic in style, reaching a culmination in the thrilling spectacle of *The Silver King* (1882), a work which, although artificial in theme, contains some powerfully conceived and admirably handled situations. Two years after the production of this piece (1884), however, came *Breaking a Butterfly*, an adaptation of *A Doll's House*, and *Saints and Sinners*. The latter is a drama which, in spite of many essentially melodramatic features, was a more remarkable play in 1884 than *The Profligate* was in 1889 It takes for its sphere the English middle class in a provincial town, introducing as principal characters Hoggard, the ruthless small-business man, and Prabble, the mean little grocer of low mentality and outward godliness. Into this atmosphere comes the figure of Letty, daughter of Pastor Fletcher, and symbolic of ideals and desires above and beyond their sordid environments. In its development the drama takes a double course. On the one hand, we are presented with a set of everyday problems, the hatred of the petty shopkeeper at the larger Co-operative Stores, the meaninglessness of conventional Puritanism, the rapacity and poverty of soul in middle-class society. On the other, we are treated to a somewhat melodramatic story in which Letty is betrayed by a high-born villain, one Captain Fanshawe. Letty dies, but not before there is a

scene of pathos in which her true lover, George Kingsmill, has returned to breathe his most generous of sentiments. The two moods hardly go together, but they are indicative merely of the fact that in 1884 the drama had not succeeded fully in emancipating itself from the shackles which had lain heavy upon it for nearly a century. The atmosphere of soul-poverty was continued in *Judah* (1890), a much more finely written play, in which Jones continued to deal with problems of man's spiritual life. Sir Arthur Pinero had so far thought only of further elaborations of the usual themes of sex; Jones realized that the drama, if it were to advance, must get beyond that to depict, in the largest sense of the word, man's religious faiths and to trace his spiritual life.

With the work of these two men the foundation of the modern drama was laid. The last years of the eighties saw the growth of an entirely new attitude toward the drama. The productions of F. C. Philips' *As in a Looking Glass* (1887) and of Sydney Grundy and F. C. Philips' *The Dean's Daughter* (1888) during the season of 1887–88 showed the way theatrical tastes were moving. The promise of Robertson was about to be fulfilled.

CHAPTER III

GILBERT AND SULLIVAN

AT the period when the domestic drama was thus being tentatively established one man, Sir William Schwenck Gilbert, succeeded in reaching almost absolute perfection in one particular dramatic form. To define the Savoy Operas is impossible; they exist on a plane of their own, and, although they belong to the extravaganza tradition and although they have exerted a considerable influence on later English comedy, it is impossible to class them justly either with the one or the other. Gilbert's dramatic career had started in the seventies, when, in the variety of different styles he attempted, he indicated the many qualities which later went to make up the spirit of the Savoy Operas. His main tendencies were cynical, witty, and satirical, with a decided leaning toward parody and burlesque; but to these he added a strangely poetic fancy and a delicate, whimsical humour. Gilbert can see the opposite side of the picture as the romantic poets could not see it, yet he retains something of their fervour; he can be [illegible]

Something of these qualities is apparent already in *The Palace of Truth* (1870) in which King Phanor's enchanted palace, where all entering must speak the truth, forms the setting. There the cold Princess Zeolide becomes hysteri- [illegible] Prince *Philamir* there grows [illegible] rdonically bitter Aristæus [illegible] Gilbert's fancy is well exem- [illegible] coquettish Azema tries to [illegible]

and Galatea (1871), where the classic legend is seriously d
with. The pure element of poetry in Gilbert's work fi
no finer expression than is given here, although the us
the pathetic is delicately and imaginatively utilized ag
in *Broken Hearts* (1875), another fairy comedy. T
whimsicality, on the other hand, is exploited in the farci
comedy of *Tom Cobb* (1875), where the mock reverence
women is cleverly dealt with. The truth is that Gilbe
was a genius unique in kind. In his laughter lurks a
element of bitterness; in his parody a note of reverence
in his irresponsible topsy-turvyism a serious purpos
Those who flock to *The Mikado* (1885) or to *The Pirates o
Penzance* (1879) or to *Patience* (1881) may for the mos
part lose sight of the bitterness and the seriousness of aim,
but, although his first object was to raise a laugh or to charm
by a song, he desired that the laugh and the song should
bear the sting of a satirical touch. Even such a delightfully
fantastic opera as *Patience* exhibits this. The cult of the
sunflower and the velvet breeches has now long passed away,
but it was quite a fashionable thing in the last decades of
the nineteenth century. Gilbert's satire of it reminds us of
the satire of Restoration times, even as his wit sometimes
has a flavour of Congreve's style. This revival of Restoration atmosphere was to be of great import for the development of later comedy, and even although we recognize
that his precise medium is inimitable, we must realize that
he had a considerable influence upon his contemporaries.
He killed the full flower, now too full blown, of the romantic
poetic play, substituting in its stead this satiric style of
his own. Though there was none to carry on his work
directly, he aided in dethroning an artificial imagination in
favour of a fanciful realism.

The genuine creativeness of Gilbert's style is revealed
when we turn from it to the pretentiousness of the contemporary Tennysonian poetic play. Where Gilbert invented and threw personality into his work, Tennyson
merely carried on the dull old strains of romantic verse
drama. Tennyson tries his best at poetic drama, but fails
to infuse into the form anything of freshness or beautiful

PART VII

THE REVIVAL IN THE THEATRE (1890–1920)

CHAPTER I

MAIN TENDENCIES

THE drama that we know as 'modern' was definitely founded in the nineties of the last century, although, as we have seen, the efforts of various playwrights of the 1860–90 period did much to clear the path for their successors. It was only after 1890 that Ibsen's influence came to be deeply felt, and, although years had still to pass before his treatment of themes and his technical methods came to be fully accepted, it is evident that from 1890 onward a new spirit and a new enthusiasm have the dramatists in their grip.

The development, of course, was not always a direct one, and Ibsen emasculated had for a time to serve ere audiences became sufficiently bold to throw over Clement Scott and accept William Archer as their teacher. Ibsen had drawn the woman of the future; Pinero substituted the woman with a past, and, being well aware of what the public wanted, was heartily acclaimed. For a time the stage revelled in the company of ladies who, outwardly respectable, were known to have some dark secrets in their lives, and, although their company was perhaps a trifle more interesting than that of earlier sentimental heroines, they stood far off from the array of Ibsen's women. The public soon got cured of their interest in this kind of person and passed to newer objects of affection, each step bringing them just a little nearer to the profound view of life expounded dramatically by the Norwegian master. In spite, however, of the clearly marked stages of progress, certain definite main tendencies may be traced—tendencies which affected almost all the

dramatists of this time, even though each found a different way of enunciating them.

[illegible]

in time or place. Ibsen had taught men that drama, if it was to live a true life of its own, must deal with human emotions, with things near and dear to ordinary men and women. Hence the melodramatic romanticism and the chill pseudo-classic remoteness alike disappeared in favour of a

[illegible]

between the *Ion* and *Virginius* of the early romantic period and the *Nan* and *Waste* of later days is complete. But difference in subject-matter is not all. With the treatment of actual life the drama became more and more a drama of ideas, sometimes veiled in the main action, sometimes didactically set forth. These ideas were for the most part

[illegible]

took the form of reaction to past literary models, to

[illegible]

which they were fighting against, capitalism represented the social state which they were bent on altering. The [illegible] eager to strike out on new paths,

[illegible]ung men struggle

[illegible] prejudice; young women join eagerly the Feminist movement and glory in a new-found liberty. Constantly questing, constantly restless and dissatisfied, seem the characters of these plays, especially when they are placed by the side of their predecessors, the placid heroes and clinging heroines of romantic

drama. Romantic love, too, came in for its particu
onslaughts. New investigations into the meaning of se
which gave to the nineteenth century the philosophy
Schopenhauer and to the twentieth that of Freud, broug
men to believe no more in love as it was expressed by the
forefathers, but in what Mr Bernard Shaw has styled th
life force. With the sundering of those veils of prudery
with which the Victorian era had clothed the facts of sex
the new dramatists came to take a definitely scientific view
of life. Social convention, common standards of existence,
seemed as nothing compared with this tremendous fact;
Ann tracks down the father of her children in *Man and Superman*, and her sister, Ann Leete, in Mr Granville-Barker's play, throws over Lord John Carp for the plebeian John Abud. Mightily the dramatists loved to make Life and Nature play their great parts on the stage. The desire for liberty in domestic and in moral circles was paralleled by the desire for liberty in social life. Suddenly the playwrights became aware of the depressing circumstances in which the poor are fated to dwell; they viewed the squalor and the misery of the cities; they looked around and saw the terror of modern civilization. The class-war, which has found its expression in actual life, was freely dea with by the newer school, cynically yet profoundly b men such as Mr Bernard Shaw, seriously by men such a Mr Galsworthy.

Being a drama of ideas, the modern theatre tended tc become more static. The necessity of expressing in the three hours' traffic of the stage a multitude of diverse theories and points of view seriously interfered with the action of many plays. Inner conflict was substituted for outer conflict, and drama became quieter than had been the swashbuckling romantic theatre of previous years. This development, as has been hinted above, was a normal ne, and but betokens the gradual progress by which the rama kept abreast of changing conditions. This inner uality of the modern theatre was intensified greatly by e recent investigations of psychologists. The new study the 'soul' interested many, and none more than the

dramatists. In their plays, therefore, they sought ever more subtly and delicately to limn the most intricate aspects of the human spirit.

In many ways this inwardness is connected with another marked development in twentieth-century dramatic art. To express these almost inexpressible ideas, emotions, instincts, wh [illegible] new writers [illegible] cient. They [illegible] culty which faced the mystics of countless centuries before, and they came to employ the same methods for the explaining of their purposes. Where direct enunciation was impossible [illegible] would aim in introducing these things; but consciously or unconsciously they are employing one of the surest means of raising apparently sordid subject-matter on to a higher and truly tragic plane.

With the increased inwardness must be accounted, too, a tendency on the part of some of our living dramatists to make their protagonists not men, but unseen forces. Reference here is not to ghost-forms such as Sir James [illegible] drama. More will be said of this in a treatment of Mr Galsworthy's work, but the tendency must be noted here as one of the chief which separates the earlier theatre from the later.

Turning from the *drame* and tragedy proper to the world of comedy, we find many marked developments in these

years. Perhaps that which deserves most attention is th[e] revival of the comedy of manners. In many ways we seem now to be approaching a new Augustan period, when reason rather than imagination, common sense rather than romantic nonsense, will dominate life and literature. It cannot be denied that a definite return is being made to the witty, satirical comedy which rose to full flourish with Congreve [in] 1700. Oscar Wilde, Henry Arthur Jones, and a number [of] others aided in the establishment of this form of drama once more; the successful revivals of *The Beggar's Opera* and *The Way of the World* seem to mark a certain correspondence in the tastes of the public. At times this new comedy of manners is almost purely fanciful and dependent upon wit for its being, but more frequently it assumes a cynical and bitter tone which corresponds in its own way to the social purpose of more serious playwrights. Mr Maugham's *Our Betters*, for example, while reflecting the style of the manners comedy, has in its apparently cynical satire a depth and seriousness lacking in most works of the seventeenth century. Of these *The Plain-Dealer*, perhaps, is nearest it in general aim and atmosphere. It is perfectly natural that the age should be satiric. Satire will always flourish in a society which has become over-civilized, where the artificial life rendered necessary by city existence has driven men emotionally and morally to depart over-far from elemental conditions and primitive impulses. It is probable that this satire will continue as a marked feature of modern dramatic activity.

No account of modern drama can be complete without reference to the Shavian comedy. Mr Bernard Shaw is [a] peculiar admixture of Ibsen and Wycherley. His aim [is] as serious, his analysis is as deep, as those of any of the [m]ore solemn dramatists, yet he cloaks that seriousness of [pu]rpose with a gaiety and a wit which has rarely been [eq]ualled in any time. We may call Mr Shaw's plays [co]medies of purpose. They aim at being as laughable as [Con]greve's, as stinging as Jonson's, as profound as Ibsen's. [The]re is no earlier comedy in English akin to those of Mr [Sha]w; he has brought to the English stage a type of drama [enti]rely new—a type, however, which few could follow.

Unquestionably critics of a hundred years hence will regard his plays as one of the most notable contributions to the tl [illegible] nd only o [illegible] nedy of p [illegible] italism, demands a genius not only of a high, but of a peculiar order.

A brief summary of the main tendencies noted may close this section. Drama, we have seen, became after 1890 a drama of ideas, but of ideas based always on the contemporary social conditions. The themes of tragedy were normally t [illegible] lem of so [illegible] spectator. [illegible] symbolic elements in the theatre, leading in their extreme form to the tragedies of Mr W. B. Yeats. In comedy a revival of the manners style and a plentiful employment of satire mark the best works of the present century, and Mr Bernard Shaw has introduced what is virtually a new type of drama in his long series of realistically fanciful plays.

CHAPTER II

DOMESTIC TRAGEDY AND PROBLEM PLAY

Sir A. W. Pinero and Henry Arthur Jones

SIR ARTHUR WING PINERO deservedly holds one of the chief positions in the world of what we may style pre-modern drama. His place has been taken by other playwrights more revolutionary than he, but his influence on the dramatists of the eighteen-nineties was enormous, and is still exercised on more than one present-day writer. Sir Arthur Pinero's work is, as has already been indicated, of a very varied quality and style. His theatrical efforts are numerous, extending from his first farce of 1877 to the recently produced *A Cold June* of 1932. Probably, however, he will be remembered most for four problem plays—*The Second Mrs Tanqueray* (1893), *The Notorious Mrs Ebbsmith* (1895), *Iris* (1901), and *Mid-Channel* (1909). With these, for historical purposes, may be considered *The Times* (1891).

All of these are alike in dealing with problems of social life in a manner tragic or approaching to the tragic. In style they are marked by the same features which distinguish all the Pinero plays—excellence of construction. It is a fact, however, that in the world of the drama construction may be too excellent. It may rise to such a pitch of perfection that it becomes positively mechanical. French writers such as Sardou, Scribe, and Augier had taught to playwrights the secret of this construction. Dramas were rolled off ceaselessly to a set plan. Characters, incidents, exposition, climax, and *dénouement*—all were governed by certain laws, and once the mould was secured plaster casts could be struck off almost indefinitely. Sir Arthur Pinero,

are often ' theatrical ' rather t[illegible]

[illegible]

with a double ending, by which the curtain fell either on unmitigated tragedy or on a conventional happy ending where the hero is forgiven and all is well The vicious taste of late seventeenth-century drama, which influenced Suckling's *Aglaura* and Howard's *The Vestal Virgin*, was not lost even in 1889.

These weaknesses arising out of an excellence of construction which becomes dully mechanical are paralleled by another notable trait in Sir Arthur Pinero's more serious work. He deals with the stuff of tragedy, but rarely in a tragic manner. To understand this aright we must return for a moment to the question of the *drame*. The *drame*, that form of playwriting which was invented in the eighteenth century, provides a novel and perfectly legitimate sphere for the dramatist. The *drame* is simply a serious problem play where the emotions never rise to tragic height and where the *dénouement* is in harmony with the general [illegible] can rarely, [illegible] r separate [illegible] o disaster. [illegible] terror and awe, allied to a feeling of pre-eminent majesty. If these be lacking the resultant play will fall into that unhappy ground inhabited by so many of the tragic dramatists of the Augustan period. It cannot be too often insisted that pity and pathos are not genuinely tragic emotions Both may appear in great tragedies, but then only as a relief to larger and more soul-consuming passions. It is rare that in Sir Arthur Pinero's dramas we meet with those passions. His plays exist mainly on a problem, implied or stated, and on the emotion of pity.

The approach toward his most characteristic kind of achievement had appeared already in *The Weaker Sex* (1888),

and in *The Times* (1891). The former, it is true, is coloured highly by sentimentalism, and the latter aims rather at 'comic' than at 'tragic' appeal. In *The Times* we are introduced to a certain self-made tradesman, Percy Egerton-Bompas by name, whose one object in life is to obtain an entry into society. Naturally he is delighted when he learns that his daughter Beryl has become engaged to Lord Lurgashall, but disaster comes when it is discovered that his weak and stupid son Howard has secretly married his landlady's daughter. An attempt is made to hush up the scandal by 'educating' the wife and her mother, but the secret is soon revealed, and at the close of the drama we see Bompas a broken man. The theme is one which might have provided good dramatic material, but sentimentalism is permitted over-freely to intrude when Lurgashall reaffirms his desire of marrying Beryl. There seems a confusion here between a sentimentally conceived problem play and a satiric comedy; in *The Second Mrs Tanqueray* Sir Arthur Pinero was to mix, in a somewhat similar manner, the moods of tragedy and of the problem drama. This famous play deals with a problem of life, the problem of a man (Aubrey Tanqueray) who marries a woman (Paula) whom he loves, but whose past he knows to be deeply stained. The plot is well worked out, with the aid of subsidiary characters such as Ellean, the daughter, and Cayley Drummle, the good-hearted friend, ending with the suicide of the unhappy Paula. Rising to a height of emotional tension in that famous "I'm sorry, Aubrey," it yet fails to stir those deeper passions which the highest tragic art brings to us. The author succeeds in bringing tears to every eye, but the greatest tragedy soars to a lofty expanse where tears are useless and only dry-eyed fear and awe can dwell. *The Second Mrs Tanqueray* is a well-written play, but it is not a great tragedy. Nor can we style it a *drame*. It fails in the final test, striving at tragic emotion and succeeding only in the calling forth of pathos.

The pathetic and the spuriously theatric combine similarly to mar *The Notorious Mrs Ebbsmith*, a study in character spoilt by such 'curtains' as that at the close when the free-

thinking heroine, after flinging a Bible into the fire, "utters a loud cry . . ., and, thrusting her arm into the fire, drags out the book." In Sir Arthur Pinero's work as a whole we note a sort of trusting simplicity and conventional theorizing going hand in hand; his treatment of Lady Vivash and her companions in *The Weaker Sex* gave evidence of this, and another example, of even greater significance, is presented here. Similar weakness is to be found in *Iris* and even in *Mid-Channel*, although in the latter play the characters are treated with a greater firmness and sureness of touch. Nor has it disappeared in Sir Arthur's last-published play, *The Enchanted Cottage* (1922). The theme of this drama—the coming of beauty through love—is worked out in a distinctly unsatisfactory manner. The dream-world (of Barrie-esque flavour) is lacking in conviction of aim; the theme is handled with a decided lack of strength. Perhaps the particular weakness here may most effectively be realized when *The Enchanted Cottage* is compared with Mr Charles McEvoy's *The Likes of Her*, in which a similar situation is dealt with on more realistic lines.

Whatever failings Sir Arthur Pinero has, however, he must be acclaimed as a master of his craft and as one of the most important figures in the dramatic revival of our times. His sentimentalism and sometimes conventional treatment of character do not take from his importance as a pioneer

Girl (1912) prove that Sir Arthur was more than a pioneer, that for long he kept abreast of the movement which he himself had been so largely instrumental in inaugurating.

It is inevitable that the works of Sir Arthur Pinero should be considered alongside those of H. A. Jones; both started their dramatic careers about the same time, both came to turn their energies toward a revitalization of the theatre. Already the early *Saints and Sinners* and *Judah* have been

considered in this connexion. These studies in what might be termed provincial religion were immediately followed by others of a similar tendency. The poetic *The Tempter* (1893), itself unsatisfactory, might be regarded as a stepping-stone from the first experiments in this kind to *The Triumph of the Philistines* (1895) and *Michael and his Lost Angel* (1896). The first treats this subject in a mood of bitter and sardonic humour, the latter in a mood approaching the tragic. No doubt Jones was right in regarding *Michael and his Lost Angel* as his most finely written play, yet here he too, like Sir Arthur Pinero, is apt to fall into the pitfall of sentimentalism. Audrie Lesden is one of the most memorable figures in the sphere of domestic drama, but the certainty shown in her portraiture is spoilt, as Mr Bernard Shaw divined, by an inconsistency in the depicting of Michael. Instead of retaining the true stuff of tragic drama, we approach again the sphere held by so many playwrights of the eighteen-nineties.

Jones' plays were not confined to this one style. Between *The Tempter* and *The Triumph of the Philistines* appeared *The Masqueraders* (1894), which deals with the all-consuming and altruistic love of David Remon for the thoughtless Dulcie Larondie. This theme of almost heroic passion is one which made a peculiar appeal to Jones; another version of it appeared in *The Physician* (1897), wherein is shown the almighty passion of Dr Carey for Edana Hinde. Among the later plays unquestionably the finest is *Mrs Dane's Defence* (1900), which calls for special mention, not so much because of its subject as because of its supreme technical skill. The scene in which Sir Daniel Carteret divines the secret of Mrs Dane's past, with its artistically sustained tension and vivid dramatic interest, displays Jones' mastery and keen sense of the theatre more effectively than any other in the entire range of his many dramas. As a whole, however, the drama is unsatisfactory; it indicates that the author, pioneer though he was, could not keep abreast of the rapidly moving social consciousness of his time. He has striven to imitate Ibsen, but in doing so he has chosen a problem which might be thought hardly to exist. Mrs

Dane's past contained nothing that is strikingly terrible, and there seems no necessity for her sentimental return to her son in the last act and for the pretty-pretty touch of Janet's kiss. In atmosphere the play dates back beyond even *Saints and Sinners*.

Perhaps Jones' most serious failing was his seriousness. He was always very much in earnest, as his many critical pronouncements indicated, but his mind, perhaps because [illegible] but after 1896 he seemed to lose touch with his times and to become merely a relic of the past. Sir Arthur Pinero's strength is seen when we compare his plays of the decade 1900–10, expressive of changed conditions, with Jones' later efforts.

(ii) JOHN GALSWORTHY

In dealing with the work of those major dramatists who, following the path indicated by Sir Arthur Pinero and H. A. Jones, essayed the serious problem drama and the *bourgeois* tragedy, we must for convenience make some distinctions in regard to the forms chosen and to the atmosphere aimed at. Thus one of the most important figures in the early days of t[illegible] Mr George Bernard Shaw, yet [illegible] bent of their own, they have [illegible] it in a later section. At the same time it is to be observed that his trenchant genius impressed itself deeply upon his age, so that many dramatists whose works otherwise fall into a category quite apart from his own show themselves influenced by his dominant ideas and by his treatment of social questions. Similarly, we must draw some sort of line between the typical work done for the London theatres and the typical work produced at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin. Men like Mr St John Ervine help to bridge the gulf, but there is something in the Irish plays wholly lacking in the English, something which expresses itself in a richly imaginative treatment of the most sordid themes and a tendency toward

what can be called only by the name of mysticism. The English playwrights first may challenge our attention here. Of these dramatists Mr John Galsworthy, Mr Granville-Barker, and Mr John Masefield are undoubtedly the most important, the first two for their treatment of domestic and social problems, the last for his attainment of a high form of problemless domestic tragedy. Mr Galsworthy's dramatic career began only in 1906 with the production of *The Silver Box*, and the style he adumbrated in that play was brought to even greater perfection in *Strife* (1909), *Justice* (1910), *The Pigeon* (1912), *The Eldest Son* (1912), *The Fugitive* (1913), *The Mob* (1914), *The Skin Game* (1920), and *Loyalties* (1922). This list, which omits many lesser works, shows Mr Galsworthy's keen dramatic activity, and when it is remembered that these are among the most unquestioned literary successes of the twentieth century we realize that he is a dominant force in the present-day theatre.

All of his plays exhibit the same features—the omnipresence of a fundamental social problem expressed in a severely natural manner, without straining of situations or exaggeration of final issues; a corresponding naturalism of dialogue, leading at times to an apparent ordinariness; a native kindliness of heart added to the sternness of the true tragic artist; and a complete absence of sentimentalism even when pitiful scenes are introduced. These form the most marked outward features of Mr Galsworthy's realistic theatre, but there is one other quality which is often overlooked by his critics. The very titles of his dramas give a clue to this quality. It is not of Macbeths and Hamlets that Mr Galsworthy writes, not even of Dr Stockmanns or of Nans; his characters are all ordinary, commonplace men and women such as we might meet with every day. Sometimes, indeed, instead of being above they seem to be below the general average of human intellect and of human power. This has led a number of critics to question the force of his tragic appeal. No great hero is presented to us in these plays, they say; therefore our highest passions are not called out as they are summoned irresistibly forth

by *King Lear* and *Othello*. These critics seem mistakenly to have stumbled upon what marks out Mr Galsworthy's tragedies as distinctive in their time. Instead of taking as
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the early twentieth century, and in one respect he has thus anticipated the methods on which Toller's 'expressionistic' style is based. When Mr Bernard Shaw reduced that old

up the personalities who threw themselves into this or that movement. Men did not stand aghast at a Napoleon; their terror was aroused by forces which might seem dominated by one single figure, but which they realized were, after all, that one man's invincible master. The class-war which faced men was not the creation of capitalist or communist; it was the creation of twentieth-century social conditions. The power of the law, which at times seemed to crush down the unfortunate and the innocent as well as the guilty, was not the work of one man or even of one body of men; it had an existence and an independence all its own. The intangible terror of the mob spirit was seen to depend, not on the will of any one individual forming that mob, but upon some unseen presence which transcended and transformed all. In this world men oftentimes questioned that line of Shakespeare's which gave Sir James Barrie the title for one of his later plays:

> The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,
> But in ourselves, that we are underlings,

and if they did not share Kent's view that

> It is the stars, the stars above us govern our conditions,

they were tempted to believe that civilization had grown so huge, so vast, so majestic, that it crushed mankind miserably beneath it. It is this truth that Mr Galsworthy would teach. The governor and the warders of the prison in *Justice* are not inhuman brutes; the business men are not grasping materialists, callous and hard-hearted; yet these men are the tools of destiny. The pitiful Falder is caught in the toils of a force which transcends all the characters in the drama; they are not the direct cause of his fate; his fate depends upon society. The place that the tyrant took in ancient days is assumed by an invisible yet omnipresent force of civilization.

This leads us to the question of Mr Galsworthy's tragic appeal. Judged by the standards of Grecian and Elizabethan art his plays are not high tragedies. There is in them no single hero who stands forward as a dominant figure, rising to a loftier height than his fellow-men. But we cannot judge the art of the present day by the standards of the past. That was the error of the pseudo-classical critics of the Augustan period. If we come to essentials we find that Mr Galsworthy's plays do not fall, as Sir Arthur Pinero's fall, into pathos. The author possesses, despite his kindliness of heart, a genuine tragic firmness. We do not feel pity for the fate of Falder so much as we feel awe in contemplating the mighty millstones of Justice, grinding exceeding small, ruthless and fateful in their silent power. The tragic atmosphere dominates the play; tears are useless and vain. The heroes of Mr Galsworthy's dramas are the nseen fates of modern existence, against which we, poor nortals, can but pitifully cry out in moments of desperation nd horror.

All of these dramas depend upon a social problem of is sort. *The Silver Box* deals with the old adage that ere is one law for the rich and another for the poor. It not, however, that Jack Barthwick, the happily born ef, is so thoroughly a rascal, as that he finds himself circumstances over which he has no control. During police-court scene, when the magistrate tells Jones, the f of no connexions and no money, that he is " a nuisance

to the community," Jack Barthwick leans from his seat and cries, "Dad! that's what you said to me!" Both father and son realize perfectly that Jones is being badly treated, that he and Jack should, in a just society, have received the same punishment; but circumstances will it otherwise. The one is a rich man's son; the other is a nobody. Society, that invisible presence, determines that the rich shall be preferred to the poor. So in *Strife* Mr Galsworthy does not make either Anthony, director of

[illegible]

[illegible] ...nent [illegible] ...ssor [illegible] All [illegible] this impression. *Strife* ends with wasted lives and a settlement the terms of which are precisely the same as those proposed at the beginning of the struggle. In *Justice* we feel the waste implied in Falder's suicide, and the same spirit is trenchantly expressed in *The Mob*. *The Pigeon*, *The Eldest Son*, *The Fugitive* and *Loyalties* are all alike in [illegible] and in making the faiths of man

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human forces and of the waste involved in their clash a[illegible] conflict. In these ways Mr Galsworthy's drama, true it is to the finest traditions of tragic art, is fundamental[illegible] modern, expressing to his age the spirit of the twentie[illegible]

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All of these dramas depend upon a social problem of this sort. *The Silver Box* deals with the old adage that there is one law for the rich and another for the poor. It is not, however, that Jack Barthwick, the happily born thief, is so thoroughly a rascal, as that he finds himself in circumstances over which he has no control. During the police-court scene, when the magistrate tells Jones, the thief of no connexions and no money, that he is " a nuisance

to the community," Jack Barthwick leans from his seat and cries, "Dad! that's what you said to me!" Both father and son realize perfectly that Jones is being badly treated, that he and Jack should, in a just society, have received the same punishment; but circumstances will it otherwise. The one is a rich man's son; the other is a nobody. Society, that invisible presence, determines that the rich shall be preferred to the poor. So in *Strife* Mr Galsworthy does not make either Anthony, director of the company, or Roberts, leader of the workers, a man who governs events. Both, possibly, possess iron wills. They have determined to fight to the bitter end, but they are not individualities as the Shakespearian heroes were. Anthony takes his strength from what may be called the capitalist [illegible] from the faith of the rebels. Funda- [illegible] impression. *Strife* ends with wasted lives and a settlement the terms of which are precisely the same as those proposed at the beginning of the struggle. In *Justice* we feel the waste implied in Falder's suicide, and the same spirit is trenchantly expressed in *The Mob*. *The Pigeon*, *The Eldest Son*, *The Fugitive* and *Loyalties* are all alike in [illegible] and in making the faiths of man [illegible] vagabonds [illegible] problem of morality as applied to rich and to poor. *The Fugitive* treats of women's position in social life. The spirit of the crowd and idealism dominate *The Mob*. *Loyalties* is a study in racial pride and social convention. In not one of these is a true hero, yet all are full of heroes. In all the tragic impression is sure, because of this sense of superhuman forces and of the waste involved in their clash and conflict. In these ways Mr Galsworthy's drama, true as it is to the finest traditions of tragic art, is fundamentally modern, expressing to his age the spirit of the twentieth

century as Shakespeare's tragedies enshrined the spirit of the Renascence. Our study of drama, if it is to teach us anything, must teach us to be prepared to welcome new developments in that art which, above all others, is most sensitive to the ideals of the age in which it is born. To attempt to imitate Shakespearian drama now, in its original form, would be as absurd as to plead for a return to the stage-coach in place of the locomotive. Man wishes for means of conveyance in all ages; the desire was the same in ancient Egypt as it is to-day, but the means are different. So in tragedy the fundamental passions remain unaltered from century to century, informing the work of Ibsen as they informed the work of Æschylus; only the means which Æschylus used to arouse those passions bear the same relation to the means of Ibsen that a chariot does to an aeroplane. The one is the perfect expression of Grecian life, the other of modern, and, while we may still appreciate the worth of the more ancient, we realize that it will be inadequate to cope with the changed conditions of a modern consciousness. The demands are the same, but circumstances have altered the media and the ideals and the means of expression.

(iii) Harley Granville-Barker

The career of Mr H. Granville-Barker began somewhat earlier than that of Mr Galsworthy, his first play, *The Weather Hen*, written in collaboration with Berte Thomas, having been produced in 1899. His dramatic works include some delightfully fantastic pieces such as *Prunella* (1904), written with Mr Laurence Housman, and *The Harlequinade* (1913), written with Mr D. C. Calthrop, but he takes his place here by reason of four 'realistic' plays—*The Marrying of Ann Leete* (written 1899; acted 1901), *The Voysey Inheritance* (1905), *Waste* (1907) and *The Madras House* (1910). Each of these concretizes a dominant problem of social life. The first is a serious treatment of a theme dealt with amusingly by Mr Bernard Shaw. The life force, of which the latter speaks so often, is enshrined in the hearts

of George and Ann Leete, who look with disgust upon the convention and hypocrisy surrounding the social culture of the time. In contrast with them we are introduced to Lady Cottesham, the elder sister, whose marriage of convenience has brought nothing but misery and soul-barrenness. The two younger people strike out against the domination of convention. George is the first to find a will of his own. Stepping from the highbred, and, let it be said, somewhat vulgar, surroundings in which he has been reared, he actually makes himself a rival to John Abud, the gardener, for the love of Dolly Crowe, a common farmer's girl. He is successful in his wooing, and, in the midst of universal execration, he marries her. Ann, meanwhile, feels the spirit of revolt burning in her breast. She is destined to wed the vacuous Lord John Carp, and it seems as if she will be dragged into a loveless marriage such as will please her father, when suddenly in the queerest way her whole being is illuminated. [illegible] has [illegible] dy [illegible] ful [illegible] of parental wishes, she scandalizes every one by requesting the gardener to marry her. She has found her mate and she is freed.

This play, as is evident, has about it a touch of fancifulness, and is Mr Granville-Barker's first essay in depicting "the secret life." At moments we might imagine that we are wandering in the dim-set garden of Prunella's dream-house, but the realistic purpose is evident. In it we find the fine expression of a certain realistic-fanciful art, difficult of attainment and rarely practised. In *The Voysey Inheritance* [illegible]

[illegible]

that which confronted Vivie Warren. He would rather go

to prison than continue the sham. Mr Granville-Barke
play emphasizes—not with one mighty sledge-hamm
stroke, but by a series of mallet-tappings—the sense
crushing, belittling imprisonment which he, along with othe
dramatists, feels in the life of his day, the seeming futility c
higher ideals, the desire for freedom, the passionate spiri
of revolt. The answer which he gives to his problem,
however, takes the form of a compromise. Beatrice Voysey
has battled out her own way to seeming liberty and has
succeeded only in hardening her feeling, in making coarse
her inner nature. In the struggle her soul has been seared as
society had sought to take vengeance upon her and had
branded her with the brand of Cain. Obviously the author's
real sentiments are given to Alice Maitland, who, standing
beside and comforting the broken Edward Voysey, pleads
for no extreme course. She sees as plainly as the othe
the misery and the squalor and the crass barrenness aroun
but, unlike the rest, she divines, clear-sightedly, that societ
will take its toll of any who strive too ardently against it
that in this civilization of ours it is our only way to res
content under many of the slings and arrows of outrageous
fortune. The solution, therefore, while it is not definitely
unhappy, has about it something of the despair of tragic art.

In *Waste*, perhaps, Mr Granville-Barker draws nearest
to Mr Galsworthy. The problem is here one of sex, which
already its author had introduced as the main theme in
his *The Marrying of Ann Leete* and as a subsidiary motive
in *The Voysey Inheritance*. It is that of the woman with
no motherly instincts faced by the philoprogenitive man.
Fascinated by the outward beauty of Amy O'Connell,
Henry Trebell, a brilliant young politician, falls in love
with her. She is to have a child, but, unable to face the
duties of motherhood, seeks illicitly to destroy it. The
operation proves fatal both to herself and to her unborn
baby. Meanwhile, her action brings disaster to Trebell.
He is on the eve of great political advancement, but Amy's
death causes him to be politically ostracized. He is faced
with cold looks, and his advance is stopped. The loss of the
child of whom he had thought so much, and the blow to

his political career, prove fatal to him. He sinks into [illegible] d in a moment of extreme [illegible] tragedy as a whole is full of [illegible], hardly a ray of hope serves [illegible] the life depicted. While in some ways the work is akin to Mr Galsworthy's art, in many others it is wholly antagonistic to it. Mr Galsworthy has little interest in sex themes as such; and in this play [illegible]

forces. It is a much more complex play than any of tl others, involving a greater number of prominent typ in its folds. The Huxtable household at Denmark H introduces us to the slightly rebellious Julia and Jan the more rebellious Philip, the conventional Mrs Huxtabl the miserable Mrs Madras, and the socially impossib [illegible]

do nothing. The free independence of a Constantin Madras may win for its possessor a certain modified libert but that liberty, after all, is selfish. The higher idealis of a Philip can do naught against the deeply entrenche and heavily fortified forces of social custom and of soci prejudice. Here a certain atmosphere as of Mr Gal worthy's invisible presence comes to tinge the drama wit its darkened shapes.

Mr Granville-Barker's theatre is a thing of its own, yet bound by many ties to the dramas of his contemporaries. He is probably a greater delineator of character than any of those with whom we have just dealt, and he has carried the realistic style to a further stage than they have done. His plays seem, even more so than those of Mr Galsworthy, to be excerpts from life. The curtain rises, and we seem to be actually and not fictionally in the drawing-rooms of upper middle-class society. The dialogue is the dialogue of ordinary men, the native brilliance of Mr Granville-Barker's style being restrained so that the naturalistic effect may be the greater. This produces a powerful atmosphere of its own; no man has succeeded better in reproducing in dramatic form that crushing littleness which dominated so many English homes in the nineties of the last century and which still, in those dismal realms called suburbia, exercises its baneful effect upon the many miserable beings cabined and confined in a prison which Edward Voysey saw was worse than Wormwood Scrubs.

(iv) JOHN MASEFIELD

The third great dramatist of the domestic school whose name was mentioned earlier in this chapter is Mr John Masefield, creator of *The Daffodil Fields* and of *Reynard the Fox.* Mr Masefield's plays are diverse in style, including not only *The Tragedy of Nan* (1908) and *Melloney Holtspur* (1923), but also poetic fantasia and experiments in classical decorum (*Esther* and *Berenice*, both 1921, adapted from the famous seventeenth-century tragedies of Racine). It is *The Tragedy of Nan,* however, that stands out chief among his dramatic works. Mr Masefield holds a peculiar position in the history of literary art. Gifted with a high imagination, he is by spirit sternly classical; endowed with passion, no man is more clear-sighted and logical than he; full of the fantasy of the poetic genius, he is a confirmed realist; clinging tensely to the natural world, he is wrapped in the spirit of mysticism. All of these apparently conflicting qualities, moulded together by his creative genius, are

traceable in *The Tragedy of Nan*. The story is one o unflinching 'realism.' All the cold atmosphere of a rusti setting is wrought into its scenes. Nan herself is the chil of a man who, before the action of the play begins, has beer hanged for stealing a sheep. Stained with this disgrace she lives, a veritable outcast, in the house of her uncle Pargetter. Slowly, yet with resistless force, the tragic stor develops. Nan gives her heart to Dick Gurvil, who, bein a selfish, sensual creature, is easily led away from her b Mrs Pargetter. Broken, Nan stands lonely as a truly tragic figure, companioned only in spirit by the half-mad old Gaffer, whose meanderings add a touch of high passion to the theme. Listening to him, Nan's soul becomes wrapt in the melody of thoughts high above the wearisome weakness of Pargetter, the cruel tyranny of his wife, and the fickle, passion-bereft egoism of her former lover. Life somehow takes an added beauty out of her despair, and the roaring of the Severn waters sounds like that music of the spheres of which all earthly music and all earthly passion are but dim echoes, taking their form and substance from something more vast and more universal than themselves. We may, if we will, cavil at the form of speech given to th Gaffer, yet hardly any scene in modern drama is mor effective than that in which Nan, her spirit broken ye victorious, gives ear to his lonely, heart-dulled wanderings

> *Gaffer*. The salmon-fishers'll lose their nets to-night. Th tide'll sweep them away. O, I've known it. It takes the net up miles. Miles. They find 'em high up. Beyond Glorster Beyond 'Artpury. Girt golden flay-flowers over 'em. And apple trees a-growin' over 'em. Apples of red and apples of gold They fall into the water. The water be still there, where the apples fall. The nets 'ave apples in them.
>
> *Nan*. And fish, gaffer ?
>
> *Gaffer*. Strange fish. Strange fish out of the sea.
>
> *Nan*. Yes. Strange fish indeed, gaffer. A strange fish in the nets to-morrow. A dumb thing. Knocking agen the bridges. Something white. Something white in the water. . . .

The restraint and the imaginative passion of Mr Masefield's genius are well-nigh perfect.

In *The Tragedy of Nan* Mr Masefield has created the

greatest modern example of that form of domestic tragedy which found its first masterpiece in Heywood's *A Woman Killed with Kindness*. There is here little employment of social purpose. The play certainly gains an added grandeur by its use of heredity as a fatal force, consuming children's lives for the sins of their parents, but fundamentally it is a drama of domestic life and character. It takes its chief majesty from the *dramatis personæ* introduced into it. Perhaps the figure of the Gaffer and the many passages of purely poetic utterance are significant, indicating that every masterpiece of this kind of domestic tragedy must introduce something of a supernatural and imaginative cast. Unless this be done the ordinary nature of the theme chosen will lead toward a merely sordid note. In high tragedy we require to be raised out of the world in which we spend our days into a realm of clearer imagination, of nobler passion, of more poetic experience.

Periodically, during his varied career as a playwright, Mr Masefield has returned to domestic drama, unfortunately not with the rich inspiration which fired *The Tragedy of Nan*. *The Campden Wonder* (1907) and *Mrs Harrison* (written 1906) are both unrelieved *bourgeois* tragedies, but neither has a sp[illegible] illumined the other play. *Melloney Holtspur* is more of a *drame*, and to a certain extent is weakened by the direct introduction of supernatural forces. The belief in spiritualism, fervently preached by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and by Professor Sir Oliver Lodge, found a certain home in the hearts of many people during and after the Great War years, and that belief has been reflected in more than one play of recent times. In introducing their spirit forces, however, the dramatists have often forgotten that art, particularly that form of art which deals with the supernatural world, is successful only in so far as it is suggestive. No ghost ever succeeded in raising so much of that "willing suspension of disbelief" which is this art's true end and aim as an allusion or delicate hint at supermundane forces has done. Frankly, few can believe in the ghost forms of Melloney Holtspur and Lonny, her faithless lover. The human, earthly story unfolds itself

excellently, and we are sho[illegible]
Lenda Copshrews and of Bu[illegible]
When the scene changes tc [illegible]
when Melloney Holtspur, leaning, like Rossetti's blessed damozel, out of the bars of her spirit world, gives her blessing to their love, we cease to believe in the reality of the picture. It must be confessed that the author has succeeded in the technical welding together of the two worlds, and has, in [illegible]

Masefield's masterpiece still is *The Tragedy of Nan.*

(v) St John Hankin and others

Many other dramatists of those years took up as their province Sir Arthur Pinero's pathetic drama, H. A. Jones' harder problem play, the tragedy of social forces elaborated by Mr Galsworthy, the realistic drama of Mr Granville-Barker, or the poignant domestic tragedy of Mr Masefield. Mr. C. Haddon Chambers, who first appeared with *One of Them* in 1886, is decidedly a follower of Sir Arthur Pinero. Among the several plays which he produced between 1886 and 1917 the best is undoubtedly *The Tyranny of Tears* (1899). Although technically a comedy and although introducing no novel or revolutionary ideas, this drama, with its easy style innocent of any of those tense situations which Jones so freely and so strikingly introduced into his plays, seems to mark an advance in dramatic technique; Mr Chambers has here taken the Pinero-Jones methods and treated those in a subdued and quietened manner. Another playwright whose style is indebted to those two dramatists is Mr Alfred Sutro, in whose work the serious treatment of social life is coloured by the prevailing sentimentalism of

approach. In *John Gladye's Honour* (1907) he deals with the problem of a strong business man who finds the affections of his wife alienated by an attractive artist; in *The Builder of Bridges* (1909) the story tells of the affection aroused in the breast of a great-souled engineer by a girl who has first approached him with the intent to trick him. Mr Sutro, like Jones, apparently believes in the heroic passion; the silent strong man of the David Remon type is his ideal.

Numbers of others trod the same paths. Among these one of the chief is St John E. C. Hankin, whose death occurred in 1909. *The Two Mr Wetherbys* (1903), *The Return of the Prodigal* (1905), *The Cassilis Engagement* (1907) and *The Last of the De Mullins* (1908) will always entitle him to fame as a writer of the serious play. Hankin, like most of his contemporaries, was a dramatist of ideas. All his plays throw a searching light upon the society of his age, and from his ideas his characters and incidents spring. This it is which causes a certain flaw in his art. Hankin knows human nature in the mass, but he cannot divine the true inner workings of the human heart. His stage figures, therefore, seem to us rather invented than felt. This impression is strengthened by the failure of the author in regard to the depiction of emotion. He always remains somewhat cynically aloof, an attitude which forms an interesting contrast to the stern-eyed kindliness of Mr Galsworthy. In general, we may say that all of Hankin's plays, well constructed as they are in the main, lack naturalism. They appear to us somewhat artificial in dialogue and in character-delineation, as if the writer were thinking more of the stage than of truth to reality. Whatever detailed portraits he introduces of English life, we feel that he has in some way or another falsified those portraits in his straining after effect.

Hankin's chief merits lie in his amusing cynicism, which reveals itself in a manner not similar but analogous to that of Mr Bernard Shaw. How delightful is the topsy-turvydom of *The Two Mr Wetherbys*, where James Wetherby, conventional and striving to feel affection for his wife when their whole lives lie apart, is faced with the problem of

persuading that wife to stay with him, and where Richard Wetherby, who has broken from his matrimonial ties, is embarrassed by his wife's desire to return to him. The same cynicism is apparent, too, in *The Return of the Prodi-*

[illegible]

social vices rarely relieved by the presence of any virtues.

[illegible]

more we are introduced to what is dealt with by so many of our [illegible] forc [illegible] hou [illegible] mit [illegible] et, who has gon [illegible] guilty of bearing an illegitimate child. Here the moral is not, as with M Granville-Barker, that the struggle for liberty sears the soul for Janet is not a Beatrice. She has won her independence having paid deeply for it, no doubt, in many privation and in many heart-burnings, but content and glad that sh

has cast off the fetters which she sees only too clearly binding the soul of her sister. This drama contains less of the omnipresent cynicism of Hankin's other work, but even here it is present in the portrait of Janet. Among the twentieth-century dramatists Hankin will always take a prominent place, but his lack of human sympathy will ever put him on a lower plane than those other playwrights with whose work we have just been dealing.

The depressing existence of the middle classes has been treated by other dramatists. Of these one of the most penetrating in the analysis of social conditions has proved to be Miss Elizabeth Baker (Mrs J. E. Allaway), whose *Chains* appeared in 1909. *Chains* is a tragedy of London suburbia, behind the all-consuming misery of whose walls burns the fire of liberty and the desire for self-expression. In the play we are led into the little house of Charley Wilson, inhabited by himself, his moderately contented because unimaginative wife Lily, and a lodger, one Tennant. The last-mentioned, weary of London life, is about to sail for Australia, and his small belongings lie ready packed for his departure on the morrow. Suddenly, and without his being fully conscious of it himself, young Wilson finds himself dissatisfied with his surroundings. London seems to be fettering him, and he would snap the chains round him in order to escape. A wild spirit of revolt surges through his being. After a period of arguing and questioning he decides to depart with Tennant. Plans are arranged, and all seems settled, when it is discovered that Lily, his wife, is to bear him a child. The gates of freedom are closed, and there remains only the prospect of the "old grey solitary nothingness," the drab surroundings and the continual daily grind at the dingy office-desk. Here once more we come upon a Galsworthian drama, one to which not the characters, but the circumstances and the forces of society give greatness. Poor as the characters are, moreover, when considered in the light of great ideals and high purpose, they are subtly portrayed, and the contrast between the quietly contented soullessness of Lily and the incipient imagination of her husband is delicately handled. We are here in the presence

of life not as expressed by an Œdipus or an Othello, but by London commercialism and suburban drabness and convention.

This drama of *Chains* was followed by its authoress with a number of more trivial pieces, among them *Cupid in Clapham* (1910) and *Edith* (1912); the note of dramatic [illegible]

domestic drama, although introducing stronger characters, is hardly so fine in its atmosphere as Miss Baker's first play. [illegible] to what he hates most, a company financing a dancing-hall, [illegible]

back what he regards as tainted money, the money of sin. *The Price of Thomas Scott* is a rather depressing play, more depressing than *Chains*, even in spite of the thwarted ambitions and the unrelieved middle-class misery of the latter. No drama of the finer sort can be without some element of hope and of larger life, and somehow this last story of hardness and fanaticism fails to give it to us.

The domestic problem play, veering to the sphere of tragedy, has been adopted by several other women writers besides Miss Baker. Miss Clemence Dane has given us, in addition to her much discussed, much vilified, but well-wrought *Will Shakespeare* (1921), a study of domestic questions in *A Bill of Divorcement* (1921), and Miss K. Githa [illegible] a deserved literary success [illegible]

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glass [illegible]
only [illegible]
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Richard nor the weak-willed John. Janet, his daughter, seems to him also a being apart, and when she stoops to marry Martin, the foreman at the works, his anger blazes forth, and she is sent from his house. Only in the end is his pride humbled and his heart a trifle softened. To him comes the deserted wife of his son, Mary, a being of sensitive feelings and acute intellect. She lays before the old man his own grandchild, who may one day take his place as master of the factory. Broken by his own loneliness, perhaps, unconscious though he be of it, yearning for some human sympathy, he takes Mary back as his daughter, and the play is ended by the cry of a child. Bleakness, barrenness, hardness, dominate this drama ; misery surrounds the seeming prosperity of the Rutherford home. Civilization has exacted a cruel toll from its own creators. It is this sense of the forces of social life, added to the grim majesty of John Rutherford, which gives this play its intensity. It is unquestionably one of the finest of those many dramas which deal with the depressing conditions of modern life. A broader spirit breathes from it, and its creator has succeeded in adding to that broader spirit by the employment of the Northern landscape to form a symbolic background for the human actors who play their miserable or noble parts in the development of the action.

Among the pre-War dramatists who took up this style none is more noticeable than Stanley Houghton, author of a number of fine comedies as well as of *The Younger Generation* (1910) and *Hindle Wakes* (1912). Like *The Price of Thomas Scott*, the first of these plays is a study of the soul-deadening effects of puritanism, although the picture is not painted in such hard colours as is that of Miss Baker's play. The theme is treated rather in a cynical than in a tragic manner. Kennion, the father, has not the stuff in him which makes a Thomas Scott. He is a well-meaning parent, full of the puritanical views of his class, but neither stern nor entirely lacking in sympathy. All sorts of excess, however, he regards as savouring of sin, and he has a quite definite moral code of his own, which he wishes to be followed by his children, but against which

they one and all rebel. It is perfectly natural that he should be horrified when Arthur comes rolling back home one evening in a state of drunkenness, insisting, in the confusion of his spirits, on kissing Maggie, the maid. The climax of the play comes when Kennion himself is forced to lie concerning his own youthful misdemeanours. It is the case of the pot and the kettle over again, told in terms of middle-class English life. As a whole, the play fails because of a discrepancy between aim and means. The theme is a serious one, and many portions border on the realm of that type of *drame* which in its turn is near to tragedy, but the situations become at times almost farcical, and a cynical mood pervades the entirety of the play. If Kennion himself is a man lacking in sympathy for the desires, which he regards as the sins, of youth, Arthur, his rebellious son, is a sufficiently weak-minded creature, and Richard, his brother, is nothing but a flabby clerk desirous of something beyond the ordinary routine of a city office. The play therefore falls between the serious *drame* and comedy, so that we feel a certain dissatisfaction in reading or witnessing it. Once more we reach the old problem of the mixing of the 'kinds' of literature. Houghton's play deals with two distinct worlds, and he was not such a genius that he could fuse those two together into a novel whole.

Much finer, because cast more in one dominating and all-pervading mood, is *Hindle Wakes*, which deals with the question of youthful revolt from another angle. The problem arises from the fact that Alan Jeffcote, son of a hard-working, honourable factory owner, spends a week-end at a sea-coast town with Fanny Hawthorn, a girl brought up in comfortable but uninspiring surroundings. He, being a luxurious young idler, looks upon the escapade as a 'lark'; so does she, with the difference that it is for her a gesture of revolution. She has dared to break the rigid fetters of a conventional morality, and is free. The climax of the drama lies in the consequences of this. Both the parents of the girl and the parents of the man agree that the two must marry, and Alan, a marrowless creature, is brought to comply. Fanny, however, to the horror

of every one, refuses point-blank. Alan is not the man she would choose. The play ends in a set of cross-purposes and an unsolved problem. Obviously Fanny is of the modern age, a sister of some of Mr Shaw's heroines, eager for independence of thought and of action. She is the spirit of the twentieth century striving to fight out a way against the traditions of the nineteenth. She is of the kin of Magda in Sudermann's *Die Heimat*, of Mrs Arbuthnot in Wilde's *A Woman of No Importance*, and of Freda in Mr Galsworthy's *The Eldest Son*. In spite of a clear exposition and a capable development of the action in *Hindle Wakes*, Houghton's drama fails as *The Younger Generation* failed. There is something of a sordidness in his work, mingled with cynicism, and both serve to leave spectators dissatisfied. Efficient playwright though he is, he does not succeed in reaching the higher levels of dramatic utterance.

More effectively, but with less atmosphere, Arnold Bennett and Edward Knoblock approached the problem play in *Milestones* (1912). The treatment of this drama is novel, and the problem dealt with is a serious one. The gradual progress from generation to generation with the retention of the same prejudices and the same emotions, even when expressed in widely different terms, is delineated with a sure touch worthy of the author of *The Old Wives' Tale* and the *Clayhanger* series. Mr Harold Brighouse, another novelist who is also a dramatist, has provided for the theatre a number of excellently portrayed Lancashire themes, although rarely has he reached the intensity of his early playlet, *The Price of Coal* (1909); and Mr St John Ervine has won deserved fame for his Belfast plays, in which he has striven to reveal in an artistic manner some of the sterner aspects of the puritan conscience.

(vi) St John Ervine

Mr St John Ervine is among the greatest of these playwrights. His method is strictly realistic, but he achieves that higher note which is frequently lacking in the dramas

of the others. Like Houghton he loves to deal with the hard conventions of a narrow society, loves to deal, also, with that perverted idealism which gave dignity to Miss Baker's work. Often, too, he includes with these things the forces of the present-day class-war, which cut across and confuse many of the older prejudices. Thus in *Mixed Marriage* (1911) he takes as his theme both the struggle of Catholic and Protestant and the struggle of master and labourer. John Rainey, the hero of the work, speaks in favour of a strike which he knows is largely engineered by Catholics, but finds his old Orange sympathies return to him intensified when he learns that his own son, Hugh, is engaged to a Catholic girl, Nora Murray. From this point the action of the play grows tense. Civil discord soon breaks out, soldiers are called in, and Nora falls, killed by a stray bullet. Perhaps part of the last act may appear somewhat melodramatic, but the *dénouement* is logically arrived at. The hatred of the Protestants and the hatred of the Catholics, confused and sometimes intensified by that class-war which is coming to assume ever greater and greater proportions in social life, give the background to a tragedy of human passions and succeed in raising these passions to a high level. The last words of Rainey, as he stands contemplating the ruin about him, have something of the majestic grandeur which is enshrined in the old father of Hebbel's *Maria Magdalena.*

A still greater success was won by Mr. Ervine in *Jane Clegg* (1913), a drama which once more deals with the depressing and soul-destroying aspects of lower middle-class life. A whole world of miserable creatures is presented to us, from the vicious and weak-willed husband and his evil genius, Munce the 'bookie,' to the monotonous and tiresome old grandmother. As a drama the whole would have seemed too sordid and too depressing were it not for the figure of Jane Clegg herself. Borne down in many ways into the mire that surrounds her, she rises superior to her circumstances, a human soul filled with that divine fire which irradiates and consumes. No idle dreamer of things impossible, no fettered woman craving for independence

and adventure, she is a stern realist, staring life full in the face and rising to the heights of her moral nature in the presence of disaster. She watches her husband's fall; she looks through him and sees the meanness and the littleness of his character; and, in doing so, she comes to realize her duty. In sending this weak, depraved, cringing creature from her house she is doing the only thing possible. In that moment she becomes truly tragic in her inner majesty.

With equal dramatic force Mr Ervine has painted for us the tragedy of *John Ferguson* (1915), another tale of middle-class life. The hero is a man hard, yet with a human understanding and a depth of sympathy in his nature. To save his daughter, Hannah, from a loveless marriage with James Cæsar he allows his farm to be taken from him. The strain is tremendous, but he rises superior to it, winning new strength from his losing yet victorious battle against fate. Meanwhile, fresh misery has come upon him. His own daughter has been seduced by his greatest enemy, Cæsar, weak though he is, plucks up courage to say that he will murder the villain, and goes out one night gun in hand for that purpose. In the morning he comes back, frightened and cringing, crying out that his will failed him in the darkness. But the seducer has been found murdered, and Cæsar is arrested. Money has come from Hannah's brother in America, and it seems as if, in spite of the terror of the preceding days, peace of a sort will come to John Ferguson's troubled spirit, when his son Andrew, who had hitherto kept silence, suddenly announces that it was he who had killed Witherow, that he cannot allow the innocent Cæsar to go to his death for him. Ferguson, after a moment of terrible doubt, understands him, and Hannah and Andrew pass out into the open bound on the terrible mission of confession.

There is the same strength in this play as there is in *Jane Clegg*. John Ferguson is a wonderful creation, a tower of strength, rude though he be, a man against whom the waves of fate may batter, but whose head remains, though bloody, yet unbowed. When we add to this brilliant

portraiture the sense of fate which Mr Ervine has summoned forth by many a subtle touch, we must realize that in this drama we have one of the masterpieces of the domestic drama. There is no problem here; there is no employment of social forces as there had been in *Mixed Marriage*; but *John Ferguson* deserves to be ranked beside *The Tragedy of Nan* as one of the outstanding productions in this particular sphere.

It seems unfortunate that these three dramas, powerful and full of a restrained passion, should have been followed by *The Ship* (1922), a play which in no way rises to the level of the others. It may be interesting as an expression [illegible] makes it rather a tract for the times than a drama. Tried by the highest tests it fails. With *Mixed Marriage*, however, *Jane Clegg*, and *John Ferguson* Mr Ervine must stand well in the vanguard of those modern dramatists who have abandoned the world of romance and have striven to give expression to the common sorrows, the common joys, and the common aspirations of life.

The greatness of Mr Ervine's work lies in his creation of [illegible] contemporaries [illegible] many of them [illegible] than on person- [illegible] the somewhat [illegible] not notice this in our awe at the tremendous dignity of John Ferguson, but others, more subtle perhaps in plot-drawing, can take no such risks. Dramatically effective, for example, is the poignant little one-act sketch of Mr J. J. Bell, entitled *Thread o' Scarlet* (printed 1923). The sheer cleverness of the work cannot be denied. The sense of horror in it is wonderfully developed, but somehow we feel that this is 'Grand Guignol' drama, not tragedy. The true aim of tragedy, we have always to remember, is not the arousing

of horror, but the arousing of terror and awe. Subtly Butters' guilt is shown to us, the playlet being in many ways a model of dramatic construction, but we are left with a feeling of dissatisfaction. The play is too clever to be real; it is a piece of artistry rather than a work of art. 'Stageyness' of a similar sort is apparent in the works of many other modern dramatists. It is present, in spite of their unquestioned strength, in the works of Mr Gilbert Cannan, and mars the otherwise excellent qualities of Mr Charles McEvoy's *David Ballard* (1907), a realistic study framed largely in the terms of theatrical melodrama. There is a certain suspicion, too, of the same artificiality in some of the scenes of *Change* (1912), the once widely discussed prize-work of Mr John Oswald Francis. *Change* is another example of what might be styled the 'generations' theme, the theme which had inspired Mr Granville-Barker's *The Voysey Inheritance*, Arnold Bennett's *Milestones*, and Miss Sowerby's *Rutherford and Son*, as well as foreign plays such as Turgeniev's *Fathers and Sons*.

A straining after novelty, which leads toward a kindred artificiality, is apparent also in Basil Macdonald Hastings' interesting drama called *The New Sin* (1912), the new sin being that of living on when one's decease may bring some joy or profit to others. The dialogue in this play is particularly good, and the subject, albeit a trifle *recherché*, is ably handled. Perhaps something of the same defect may be traced in Mr Cosmo Hamilton's *The Blindness of Virtue* (1913), where the question of sex education is freely dealt with. Indeed, there is a danger that the realistic problem drama may suffer from the same defects as those which appear only too plainly in the romantic melodrama of the mid-Victorian period. The style, when first it was introduced, had the advantage of being fresh, but, as it has developed, a certain stereotyped set of conventions has grown up even in what was primarily a drama of revolt, literary as well as social. It has become, that is to say, fatally easy to listen to provincial dialect and write it down, fatally easy to depict in some sort of manner the depressing middle-class conditions of England. Realizing

this, dramatists have been forced to seek for new situations and for more surprising turns of plot, making their works, because of this deliberate and conscious search, more and more artificial in atmosphere. By 1920 mechanical composition had begun to infect this modern English realistic drama as it infected the drama of Sardou and of Boucicault.

(vii) Irish Dramatists

So far, in carrying the survey of drama up to the present time, nothing has been said of the remarkable renascence of the theatre in Ir
itself revivified by t
Mr Bernard Shaw,
Erin, but the Abbey Theatre in Dublin produced a series of plays among which are to be numbered some of the true masterpieces of modern European dramatic art. The Irish theatre is in itself but the literary counterpart of that movement which brought Sinn Fein into birth, which gave an air of passionate idealism to the Easter Rebellion of 1916, and which has ended in the establishment of the Saorstat Eireann. The literary and political aspects of this movement cannot be separated. Some of the most promising of the younger writers gave their lives for their country, and Mr W. B. Yeats, leader of the poetic drama, is himself a senator in the Irish Parliament.

Starting as the Irish Literary Theatre in 1899, the little band of enthusiasts who were determined to make the Irish drama a thing of high culture and of European repute soon moved (in 1903), with the aid of Miss Horniman, to the Abbey Theatre, forming there a centre of art such as we have not had in the whole of England. Here Mr Yeats and Synge and Lady Gregory gathered about them a number of gifted authors; here flamed a torchlight of artistic excellence which became the model and the despair of many a writer across the Irish Sea. In form this new drama of Dublin was a development of English drama. The language employed was English, not Gaelic; there were many signs that the writers of it had taken inspiration

from the more noted works of our long centuries of London playwriting. In atmosphere, on the other hand, the Irish theatre frequently veered away from the English stage. That imaginative idealism which has always characterized the Celtic races, that love of passionate and dreamy poetry, that only half-ashamed belief in the fairy world, the People of the Mist, all gave a particular tone to the plays produced at the Abbey Theatre. Mr Yeats is a poetic dramatist, and Synge, writing in his peculiarly beautiful and imaginative prose, has little in common with the realistic playwrights of London. The chief account of the development of Irish drama will, therefore, have to be confined to that section of this book which deals with the poetic and symbolic theatre. At the same time there were a few who strove to introduce to their own land something of the realistic tone so popular among the English writers. Mr Ervine himself, who has been treated above as an English author, had many of his plays produced in the national theatre of Dublin, and men like Mr Lennox Robinson, Mr T. C. Murray, and Mr Padraic Colum depicted in sternly naturalistic manner the lives and passions and hopes of the Irish peasantry.

Mr Lennox Robinson's plays are of considerable importance. His first, and in some ways his most characteristic effort, *The Clancy Name*, was produced in 1908; his last serious plays, *The Round Table* and *Crabbed Youth and Age*, appeared in 1922. *The Clancy Name* is a somewhat bitter story of Irish pride. Mrs Clancy is an embodiment of all that tremendous passion for a family name which has characterized the clans of Scotland and the racial sects of Ireland for immemorial centuries. For her this name is as a religion. To sully it means death. To Mrs Clancy comes the terrible realization that her son is a murderer. He has killed a man in a quarrel. The body lies where no one may find it; but his conscience has been aroused. The deed gnaws into his very soul, and in his agony and distress he determines to own up, to give himself to the police. He is a weak lad, this John Clancy, but his whole being is consumed by horror, and all that his mother can say will not move him from his purpose. It seems that the Clancy name is to be

for ever sullied by the exposure of this crime, when John, walking in the street, manages to save a child from a runaway horse and in doing so is himself killed. He dies a hero, and the Clancy name is saved. There is a certain straining of probability in this sudden ending. Runaway horses do not often thus accommodate themselves to murderers prepared to confess and go to the gallows. There is, too, a certain bitterness in the somewhat cynical conclusion, which detracts from the general impression received … owever, … of Mrs … le, and here the improbability is not atoned for by tremendous passions and high fervour. The story of Ellen M'Carthy, married to a drunken brute and faced with financial ruin, all because she has given up the love of Brian Connor in … cynical bitterness tends to weaken the impression. The … her Lordan … nong whom … Although he himself believes that he has been successful in his effort, we see that he has only made them dissatisfied with their lot. Instead of a life on the land, free if hard, healthy if toilsome, they pine for the gaiety of city life. Patrick Hurley has drifted away from his own home, grown callous by his contact with civilization. Mary, his sister, has become a prostitute, eager for the good things of life which she could not have from her wages as a typist. Bob Hurley is like Patrick, successful, but callous and hard-hearted. … pily married. … ere once had … care-free joys. Lordan remains blissfully unconscious of the results of his teaching. He thinks he has done great things for Mary and Patrick, for Bob and Jack; but the veils are raised for

the spectators, so that only misery and hardness of heart are displayed. The thesis of the drama may have some truth in it. It may be, for example, that in isolated instances education of a peasant family has brought ruin and misery, evil and degradation; but we cannot generalize in great drama from the particular to the universal. It is as absurd to argue the completely vicious effects of education from a single failure as it would be to argue that because one railway train crashes with its human freight over an embankment therefore we ought to reprobate the railways and travel from London to Manchester on foot. Great drama constantly cries out for the universal in this way; nothing that is particular and isolated will satisfy its cravings for the larger and more general truths of humanity. So, too, great serious drama rarely if ever will permit the introduction of bitterness. When we listen to Lordan's words at *the close of this play, followed by Bridget's "Amen to that,"* we feel that the author has been guilty of the same offence of which he was guilty in the last act of *The Clancy Name.* He has allowed cynicism to take the place of a higher, more humane, and kindlier tragic emotion.

These three peasant dramas by Mr Robinson do not by any means exhaust his full scope. Besides them, and the excellent comedy *The Whiteheaded Boy*, he has penned a series of political dramas dealing with Irish aspirations. The first of these was *The Patriots* (1912), to be followed by *The Dreamers* (1915) and *The Lost Leader* (1918). Of these *The Patriots* and *The Lost Leader* are set in our own time. The former comes nearer to tragic intensity than any of the other dramas we have considered above, but once more Mr Robinson allows his cynical bitterness to mislead him. The story is one of a revolutionary, James Nugent, who in 1893 has been sent to prison for his participation in a political crime. In 1911 he returns, still full of hope, still full of energy, expecting to meet his old friends and share in their aspirations for a liberated Erin. But he meets nothing save coldness and chill greetings. For a time he cannot understand; he will not realize that this is so. He is billed to address a political meeting. Here, he thinks, he will at last

be able to feel his heart beating with the old enthusiasm, feel his numbed limbs pulsing with the old life. He arrives

[illegible]

a great tragedy. *The Lost Leader* is a more peculiar and at the same time a more subtle play. It deals with the legend that Charles Stewart Parnell is, or was, still alive, living obscurely in some corner of Ireland. This Irish hero of past days is discovered, [illegible] mean old innkeeper. T[illegible] "willing suspension of disbelief" is aroused show Mr Robinson's fine technical skill. We do not know whether to believe the words of the old man, roused as out of a trance, or the disavowal of his niece, Mary Lenihan. Then comes the climax. The newly discovered Parnell arranges that a meeting be called on a mountain summit, where he will bring proofs of his identity. Political squabbling breaks out, and in the scuffle the old man is killed by a mis-aimed stroke. A few minutes later there arrive some of Parnell's [illegible]

there is here again that cynicism which marred *The Clancy Name* as well as the other dramas, and there is, too, the evident artificiality of the plot. On the other hand, the cleverness with which the theme is handled makes this a truly memorable play.

In *The Dreamers* Mr Robinson turns back to the historical drama, telling of Robert Emmet and his rebellion of the early nineteenth century. Nowhere perhaps so clearly as in this play has been depicted the continual yearning and idealism of the Irish revolutionaries, and although cynicism enters in here too the action does not depend fundamentally upon bitterness. It is a sincere attempt to display the

workings of fervent passion for a seemingly hopeless ideal in the midst of actual life. Technically *The Dreamers* is not so good a drama, its action being clogged and its characters not sufficiently displayed, but in atmosphere it is one of the finest, if not the finest, of Mr Robinson's works.

Writing after the style of Mr Robinson's earlier plays, Mr T. C. Murray has provided us with some amazingly poignant realistic studies of Irish peasant life. *The Wheel o' Fortune* appeared in 1909, and was revised as *Sovereign Love* four years later. *Birthright* came out in 1910, *Maurice Harte* in 1912, *Spring* and *The Briery Gap* in 1918, *Aftermath* in 1921. All these plays are alike in taking their strength from careful observation of ordinary existence and from consistent naturalism in plot-development and in language. Fundamentally his comedies differ little from his tragedies; in both the darkness of real life is fully displayed. Thus his first play, a comedy, shows up the misery of mercenary poverty no less than do his more powerful tragedies *Birthright* and *Maurice Harte*. The latter deals with the drama that lies in thwarted ambition and misplaced hopes. Mrs Harte has determined that her son Maurice shall become a priest. He is a well-meaning and a brilliant lad, but one by no means fitted for clerical life. In torment of spirit he tries to persuade his mother that he cannot enter the Church, but all her proud spirit is aflame with ambition. Like a harsh shepherd she drives her unwilling son back. Anxious to do his loathed duty, he studies hard, but the mental toil and stress tell on him. His mind gives way under the agony of his seething thoughts, and he is brought back a lunatic. It is a terrible story of striving middle-class life in Ireland, but, because of the manner of treatment, it attains to something of tragic grandeur. *Birthright* is equally fine, although here perhaps there is too much of the sordid and the depressing. The story is a simple one, straightforwardly told. Hugh Morrissey, a fine young man, symbol of health and clean thinking, is a trifle out of touch with his rougher father's temperament. We gain the impression at the very beginning of the play that these two will never have anything in common. In the tragedy itself we are presented,

therefore, not with a series of fortuitous accidents or incidents, but with the climax in a long tale of opposing natures. Hugh has to go to a hurley match and spend the evening at a dinner. It is not that he is dissipated, but he loves sport, and it is his duty, as captain of his team, to go there. The merrymaking of the players frightens Bat Morrissey's horse; its leg is broken, and it has to be shot. Still more, a sow requires treatment and attention; Hugh is not there to take his part in the work of the farm, and Bat and his duller son Shane are wearied with toil and watching. Shane has been destined for America; his trunk is standing there ready packed, with his name in bold characters on the label. A [illegible] ather, in terrible accents, [illegible] 's name for his own. O[illegible] been done. He [illegible] own mother. A quarrel soon arises, and in the scuffle Hugh falls dead to the ground. In the simplicity of this drama lies its strength. There is a majesty in it shared by but few of these domestic dramas, and the sense we have that this is but the culmination of long-standing grievances and misunderstandings helps to bring the atmosphere to a requisite tragic height. Mr Murray here proves himself [illegible] of the [illegible]

With [illegible] mentioned Mr Padraic Colum, whose first play, *The Kingdom of Youth,* appeared in 1902. As a representative of the realistic playwrights he will always be remembered as the author of *The Broken Soil* (1903; revised as *The Fiddlers' House,* 1907), *The Land* (1905), and *Thomas Muskerry* (1910). It has been [illegible] *House* [illegible] style. [illegible] so that [illegible] His methods are at bottom as realistic as are those of his two contemporaries mentioned

above. In spite of the poetry with which the character of Conn Hourican, the fiddler, is invested, he remains after all a rogue and a vagabond. The drama arises from this man's passion for excitement and drink. His loved home is the horse-fair, where he can get as drunk as a lord and play his enchanting melodies to a gaping and admiring crowd. For some years his daughter, Maire Hourican, has kept him at home by the sheer strength of her character, but the old man feels once more the call of the tap-room. Maire sorrows, but understands. With hardly a word she brings him his fiddle, the fiddle once known throughout the length and breadth of the country, known even beyond in far-distant towns, and with him she goes off to the 'Feis' at Ardagh. In some ways it is a sorry story, for Maire is a girl of high promise, in love with life and eager for love. Her heart is broken, yet she has found a new sympathy, and she attains, as do so many of the heroes and heroines of high tragedy, an almost resigned calm, a clear-eyed realization of the meaning of life.

The Land has less of the imaginative power visible in *The Fiddler's House*. In structure it is a comedy, yet a comedy full of tragic import, another study in the theme of the old and the new generations. Ellen Douras has felt the call for the city, and with her lover, Matt Cosgar, she sets out for America, leaving almost broken-hearted the old father, Murtagh Cosgar, whose one thought is the land which he has broken and tamed for himself and his own. To the younger generation the land makes no appeal; their hearts are set on gay cities and the busy hum of men. The lonely cry of the curlew, the circling flight of the plover, the lowing of the cattle at eventime, mean nothing to them. What they will find remains unknown; but, after all, it is the unknown which tempts men, sometimes to success, more often to self-willed destruction. The song of the syrens is still with us, though Odysseus be many centuries dead.

In *Thomas Muskerry* Mr Colum has introduced another Conn Hourican in the person of the blind piper, Myles Gorman, and with the introduction of that character he has

life into another world of more beautiful, because more spiritual, presences.

Other Irish dramatists besides these three have striven to give expression to the naturalistic movement in present-day art. Lady Gregory herself, in *The Gaol Gate* (1906), provided us with a powerful little one-act piece in this style. So, too, Seumas O'Kelly has written a dramatically effective and emotionally poignant drama of peasant conditions in *The Shuiler's Child* (1909). For the most part however, the Irish writers are too mystical to allow themselves to be degraded by naturalism. A [illegible] or a [illegible] ever will be spiriting them away in spite of themselves into realms of faery and of romance. Imagination lies at the heart's-seat of them, and dreaming gives them their strength. The practical things of life may [illegible] importance in their [illegible] t haunts them, not so [illegible] oulihan, not so much [illegible] more beautiful beings

CHAPTER III

THE POETIC AND IMAGINATIVE DRAMA

Verse Drama

WITH the prevailing of the naturalistic style and with the endeavour to utilize the serious drama for the purpose of expressing ideas concerning the fundamental problems of contemporary social life, it was but natural that the poetic play should cease to have much significance. At the same time we must remember that a romantic reaction to naturalism is to be found in almost all European countries during this period, and that the realistic theatre of Ibsen displays an increasing tendency toward the imaginatively fantastic and toward the symbolic. *The Master-builder* and *The Wild Duck* are thus far more 'poetic' than *Ghosts*; the plays of M. Maeterlinck were produced at the same time as saw the appearance of some of the most extreme experiments in the French realistic style.

In the eighteen-nineties this romantic reaction serves to explain the success of Irving's Lyceum management; the audiences were enthralled by the actor and they were charmed by the scenic spectacle, but the triumph of the Shakespearian revivals and of the poetic plays produced there was due at least partly to the unconscious desire of escaping from the naturalistic style so rapidly gaining in power. The pure poetic play, however, secured in England comparatively few major adherents during the thirty years from 1890 to 1920. In Ireland it attracted some of the Abbey Theatre authors, but here only one author of importance, Stephen Phillips, remained strictly faithful to the verse form. Phillips' first true success came with *Paolo and Francesca* in 1900; this definitely established him in the literary world, and his later plays—*Herod* (1900), *Ulysses* (1902), *The Sin of David* (1904), and *Nero* (1906)—

although they drew attention to certain flaws in his work which in the first flush of triumph had passed unobserved, consolidated the position he had won for himself. Nowadays we can look back and see, in spite of a genuine knowledge of stage requirements, a vivid and melodious utterance, and at least some appreciation of the tragic spirit, many features in his plays which prevent their being placed critically alongside the masterpieces in this kind. The [illegible] 'o have much [illegible] seem not to [illegible] were thought [illegible] predecessors, [illegible] his tragedies [illegible] but there is *lacking that vital force or enthusiasm out of which alone* tragedy may be born. From both the literary and the theatrical point of v[illegible] *and Francesca*, and [illegible] Yet, seen now, [illegible] has shown the soul-torn husband, adoring both lovers, yet raging with jealousy and hate; equally effectively he has built up the interest of each successive act; but with all this his tragedy fails to move us. The passions seem to be nebulous, and the words words that move us to no great emotions.

The principal failing of Phillips' verse plays is that they are old. He looks backward always and can think of nothing save the continuance of the worn-out nineteenth-century styles based on uncritical admiration of the Elizabethans. Nothing of true virtue could be born of endeavours such as his. He has had some followers, it is true; Mr Rudolf Besier's *The Virgin Goddess* (1906) is written in similar style, and even such a romantic piece as J. E. Flecker's *Hassan* might perhaps be related to his efforts. *Hassan* is much more vivid than anything Phillips penned, yet it too fails. Published in 1922 and staged the following year with

gorgeous scenery and plentiful introduction of ballet and music, it revealed itself on printed page and in the theatre alike as lacking true dramatic strength. Fundamentally, it is but a *Chu Chin Chow* made more glorious. The Eastern setting may charm, but the characters are crudely drawn and the situations are forced. Perhaps a certain romantic intensity envelops the figures of Rafi, King of the Beggars, and the slave-girl, Pervaneh, but these cannot raise the whole to the levels of high art. The ridiculous buffoonery of Hassan, the unmitigated savagery of Haroun, the idealistic rapture of the poet Ishak, and the love-passion of the two forlorn figures whose tortured screams are heard in the last act make the poem a mere patchwork of heterogeneous elements without harmony and without form. *Hassan*, save for its poetic elements (not by any means always dramatic) and its definitely sadistic appeal, must be placed alongside and hardly above other Eastern fantasia, of which Mr Edward Knoblock's *Kismet* (1912) was the best known and the most popular.

Partly from the East, on the other hand, a new source of inspiration for the verse play came shortly after the time of Stephen Phillips. In the year 1913 a collection of English translations from old Japanese Nō dramas was published, and the success of these led to the issuing of a second collection in 1916. Here was opened before the eyes of the poets a new world. Hitherto Shakespeare's art had been all-dominant; now was discovered a strange and novel form of dramatic artistry which provided a completely new orientation. It is not, of course, to be assumed that many of the poets deliberately imitated the form of the Nō, although its style has been closely followed by Mr Yeats and by Dr Bottomley; rather did the Nō style suggest methods of treatment and experimentation in realms distinct from that of Shakespearian tragedy.

The general influence of the Japanese Nō is, it would appear, traceable in Mr Masefield's later dramatic works. *The Tragedy of Nan* had been published in 1908, and that was followed by a prose play called *The Tragedy of Pompey the Great* (1910), in which the domestic field was forsaken

in favour of the historic. Here the author's aim was clearly, on a higher plane, to contrast the idealism of Pompey and the realism of Cæsar. In *Philip the King* (1914) he turned back to a verse medium (the heroic couplet), and no doubt indicated the source of his inspiration by choosing a Japanese theme for *The Faithful* (1915). In fundamentally similar styles were written *Good Friday* (1917), *A King's Daughter* (1923), *The Trial of Jesus* (1925), *Tristan*

of the Nō stage and of the ancient classical stage becomes at once apparent.

During his earlier career Mr John Drinkwater too endeavoured to re-establish the poetic play as a dominant force in the theatre, working in an imaginative sphere before he essayed the historical themes by which he is now best known. His first important play, *Rebellion* (1914), and those which immediately followed—*The Storm* (1915), *The God of Quiet* (1916), and *X = 0: A Night of the Trojan War* (1917)—are all concerned with human passions of a romantic or fictional sort. *The Storm* is one of the most arresting of these. It reminds us in some ways of Synge's *Riders to the Sea*, by which it may not have been uninfluenced.

is falling, anc

more fiercely

flock. Old Sarah knows what it all means, just as Maurya knew. Nature is taking its toll of human lives. Out of the sweep of the wind and the lashing of the blizzard comes a strong, healthy tourist. All this is a jest to him. He has battled through and joys in the struggle. But for old Sarah and for Alice, vainly waiting, waiting till the searchers return baffled by the snowfall, there is nothing but misery. It may be good for the young traveller to laugh at his struggles, but the shepherd lies wrapped in his white cerecloth of snow, and for the women there are only tears left and sorrow.

Rebellion is more allegorical and more legendary. In an ideal land there lives old King Phane, a tyrant, but a tyrant just to his own faith. The people are restive, and in the poet Narros they discover their leader. His songs and his words excite them to action, and a revolt is planned. But Narros is smitten with romantic love for the Queen, Shubia, and he deserts his companions at the most critical hour in order to meet her at a trysting-place. His inspiration is gone from the ranks of the rebels, and they are defeated. Narros himself is captured and condemned to death. Another and a more successful revolt is planned; King Phane is deposed, but with him goes Shubia, the Queen. Narros has achieved one of his ends, but that love which seemed to consume his whole life is shattered. The conflict of political passion with that more primeval passion of love is here well developed, and the drama takes shape as a struggle of eternal principles in the human soul.

X = 0 is likewise allegorical. During a night of the Trojan War two Grecian friends, Pronax and Salvius, and two Trojan friends, Ilus and Capys, sit on the outskirts of their respective encampments. The first scene introduces us to the former pair. It is Pronax' duty to go by night to the Trojan walls in search of human prey. He sets off into the darkness, more than half loathing his work, leaving Salvius deeply immersed in a book. The second scene shows us the wall of Troy. It is the duty of Ilus to prowl round the Grecian camp in case he may be lucky enough to stab some straggler. He descends by a rope, and leaves Capys singing a ditty. In the midst of it Pronax stabs him to the heart. The third scene shows us Ilus in the tent of Salvius. Silently he stabs the Greek soldier and makes his departure. A moment or two later Pronax returns, and talks as though Salvius were alive:

> *Pronax.* What, still awake, and reading? Those are rare songs,
> To keep a soldier out of his bed at night.
> Ugh—Salvius, sometimes it's horrible—
> He had no time for a word—he walked those walls
> Under the stars as a lover might walk a garden

Among the moonlit roses—this cleansing's good—
He was saying some verses, I think, till death broke in.
Cold water's good after this pitiful doing,
And freshens the mind for comfortable sleep.
Well, there, it's done, and sleep's a mighty curer
For all vexations. [*The sentinel passes.*
It's time that torch was out—
I do not need it, and you should be abed. . . .
Salvius . . . [*He looks into the tent for the first time.*
What, sleeping, and still dressed?
That's careless, friend, and the torch alight still . . . Salvius . . .
Salvius, I say . . gods! . . . what, friend . . . Salvius, Salvius . . .
Dead . . . it is done . . . it is done . . . there is judgment
made. . . .
Beauty is broken . . . and there on the Trojan wall
One too shall come . . . one too shall come . . .
[*The sentinel passes.*

CURTAIN

The fourth and last scene is silent. It presents:

The Trojan wall. The body of Capys lies in the starlight and silence. After a few moments the signal comes from Ilus below. There is a pause. The signal is repeated. There is a pause

CURTAIN

Effective as these plays are, Mr Drinkwater discovered later a still more effective medium for the expression of his

such as Dr Gordon Bottomley and Professor Lascelles Abercrombie, who were also writing about this time.

The only other dramatist choosing this style who may be here referred to is Mr W. B. Yeats, whose work belongs, of course, to the Irish literary movement and the Abbey Theatre. In many respects Mr Yeats may be regarded
his delicately
alike tend to
s. In spite of
the dominant
he poetic and
s stretch from

"*The Countess Cathleen* (printed 1892; acted 1899) to *Four Plays for Dancers* (published 1920) and *Calvary* (1921). Nearly all are on poetic or fanciful themes.

It is possible that his finest achievement in this sphere was his first, *The Countess Cathleen*. Like Synge, Mr Yeats had to suffer a certain amount of hostility when his play was first produced. The actors, he tells us,

> had to face a very vehement opposition stirred up by a politician and a newspaper, the one accusing me in a pamphlet, the other in long articles day after day, of blasphemy because of the language of the demons or of Shemus Rua, and because I made a woman sell her soul and yet escape damnation, and of a lack of patriotism because I made Irish men and women, who, it seems, never did such a thing, sell theirs. The politician or the newspaper persuaded some forty Catholic students to sign a protest against the play, and a Cardinal, who avowed that he had not read it, to make another, and both politician and newspaper made such obvious appeals to the audience to break the peace, that a score or so of police were sent to the theatre to see that they did not.

In spite of little-minded and mistaken patriotic enthusiasm *The Countess Cathleen* has come to be regarded as one of the most beautiful poetic dramas of modern times. The story, as Mr Yeats tells us, was taken from an Irish newspaper, where it was given as an Irish legend, but was apparently translated from a French tale. Famine is creeping over the land, and two Demon Merchants are wandering up and down buying souls for bread. The Countess Cathleen, majestic in her pity, offers to buy off the souls that have been bartered, at the terrible price of her own. The Merchants, eager to gain so high a price, willingly consent, but they are thwarted in the end, for a divine pity takes pity on her own, and she is granted a heavenly crown. The drama is complicated by the presence of Aleel, lover of Cathleen, and singer of beautiful songs. His is the spirit of poetry, he is the lover of art:

> Impetuous heart, be still, be still,
> Your sorrowful love can never be told;
> Cover it up with a lonely tune.
> He that could bend all things to His will
> Has covered the door of the infinite fold
> With the pale stars and the wandering moon.

It is his impetuosity [illegible] a its last, fading beauty [illegible] to characteristic of Mr Y[illegible] be quoted here in full:

Cathleen. Bend down your faces, Oona and Aleel;
I gaze upon them as the swallow gazes
Upon the nest under the eave, before
She wander the loud waters. Do not weep
Too great a while, for there is many a candle
On the High Altar though one fall. Aleel,
Who sang about the dancers of the woods,
That know not the hard burden of the world,
Having but breath in their kind bodies, farewell!
And farewell, Oona, you who played with me,
And bore me in your arms about the house
[illegible]

[*She die*

Oona. Bring me the looking-glass.

[*A woman brings it to her out of the inner room. Oon holds it over the lips of Cathleen. All is silent for moment. And then she speaks in a half-scream:*

O, she is dead!

A Peasant. She was the great white lily of the world.

A Peasant. She was more beautiful than the pale stars.

An Old Peasant Woman. The little plant I love is broken i two.

[*Aleel takes the looking-glass from Oona and flings it upo the floor so that it is broken in many pieces.*

Aleel. I shatter you in fragments, for the face
That brimmed you up with beauty is no more:
And die, dull heart, for she whose mournful words
Made you a living spirit has passed away
And left you but a ball of passionate dust.
And you, proud earth and plumy sea, fade out!
For you may hear no more her faltering feet,
But are left lonely amid the clamorous war
Of angels upon devils.

[*He stands up; almost every one is kneeling, but it has grow so dark that only confused forms can be seen.*

And I who weep
Call curses on you, Time and Fate and Change,
And have no excellent hope but the great hour
When you shall plunge headlong through bottomless space.

[*A flash of lightning followed immediately by thunder*

A Peasant Woman. Pull him upon his knees before his curses
Have plucked thunder and lightning on our heads.

Aleel. Angels and devils clash in the middle air,
And brazen swords clang upon brazen helms.

[*A flash of lightning followed immediately by thunder.*

Yonder a bright spear cast out of a sling,
Has torn through Balor's eye and the dark clans
Fly screaming as they fled Moytura of old.

[*Everything is lost in darkness.*

An Old Man. The Almighty wrath at our great weakness and sin
Has blotted out the world and we must die.

[*The darkness is broken by a visionary light. The peasants seem to be kneeling upon the rocky slope of a mountain, and vapour full of storm and ever-changing light is sweeping above them and behind them. Half in the light, half in the shadow, stand armed angels. Their armour is old and worn, and their drawn swords dim and dinted. They stand as if upon the air in formation of battle and look downward with stern faces. The peasants cast themselves on the ground.*

Aleel. Look no more on the half-closed gates of Hell,
But speak to me, whose mind is smitten of God,
That it may be no more with mortal things,
And tell of her who lies there. [*He seizes one of the angels.*
Till you speak
You shall not drift into eternity.

The Angel. The light beats down; the gates of pearl are wide.
And she is passing to the floor of peace,
And Mary of the seven times wounded heart
Has kissed her lips, and the long blessed hair
Has fallen on her face; The Light of Lights
Looks always on the motive, not the deed,
The Shadow of Shadows on the deed alone. ✓

[*Aleel releases the angel and kneels.*

Oona. Tell them who walk upon the floor of peace
That I would die and go to her I love;
The years like great black oxen tread the world,
And God the herdsman goads them on behind,
And I am broken by their passing feet. ✓

[*A sound of far-off horns seems to come from the heart of the Light. The vision melts away, and the forms of the kneeling peasants appear faintly in the darkness.*[1]

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[1] This last scene was slightly revised after the performance of 1899. The variations are given in the *Poems* of 1912, pp. 315–319.

Before *The Countess Cathleen* first appeared on the stage *The Land of Heart's Desire* had been performed, in 1894. This is another union of the poetical treatment of peasant life and the world of spiritual presences. Bridget Bruin is representative of the matter-of-fact, hard-working world, completely out of touch with her son Shawn's wife, Mary, whose mind is filled with "foolish dreams" of

How a Princess Edane,
A daughter of a King of Ireland, heard
A voice singing on a May Eve like this,
[illegible]

Out of the woods comes a fairy child, and at its call Mary must go. She loves her Shawn, she loves the world, but she has heard the horns of the elfin troops, and her spirit departs to the land of dancing and joy, even in death. There is a sound of feet outside on the grass and many voices singing:

The wind blows out of the gates of the day,
The wind blows over the lonely of heart,
And the lonely of heart is withered away;
While the faeries dance in a place apart,
Shaking their milk-white feet in a ring,
Tossing their milk-white arms in the air;
For they hear the wind laugh and murmur
  and sing
Of a land where even the old are fair,
And even the wise are merry of tongue;
But I heard a reed of Coolaney say—
"When the wind has laughed and murmured
  and sung,
The lonely of heart is withered away."

Among Mr Yeats' other dramas *Cathleen Ni Houlihan* (1902) seems the most arresting. Many of the rest, among them *The Shadowy Waters* (printed 1900, acted 1904, revised 1906), *The Hour-glass* (1903, revised 1912), *The King's Threshold* (1903), and *Deirdre* (1906), are full of beautiful poetry, but all suffer from the defects of his still

more recent works in making lovely verse the prime agent in securing his effects. Action becomes lost under a shimmering mist of delightful words. *Cathleen Ni Houlihan*, on the other hand, tells a straightforward story—how in 1798 Michael Gillane is preparing to marry the girl he loves, Delia Cahel, and how an old crone enters the cottage and with her words fires the heart of Michael. As it came to Mary Bruin, so the call of spiritual life has come to him and he must go. In spite of all pleadings he steps out of the cottage, heedless of their words, and the voice of the old crone can be heard outside. But she is no woman, this strange figure; she is Cathleen Ni Houlihan, symbol of Ireland herself, and when they look out of the cottage door they see that she has become transformed. Instead of an old crone she has become "a young girl, and she had the walk of a queen."

All of Mr Yeats' dramas suffer from too great lyrical fervour, and from a lack of action; yet they are unquestionably among the finest poetic plays of our time. Their union of reality and of spiritual things, their note of dreamy beauty, their pre-eminent mysticism, place them in a sphere by themselves.

(ii) J. M. Synge and the Irish School of Imaginative Dramatists

Whatever of beauty has been secured by the utilization of verse as a dramatic medium in modern times, it must be evident that the age was not so fully prepared to welcome the pure poetic drama as had been the age of Shakespeare. Perhaps in this way J. M. Synge was more truly creative than Mr Yeats, for, realizing the necessity of discovering some medium better fitted to convey to the ears of contemporaries the figures of the poetic imagination, he set himself deliberately to a task which has been of infinite service to his successors. Mr Yeats, as verse artist, has taken over many of the forms used by his predecessors; J. M. Synge evolved a new form more closely in accord with the spirit of his age.

Synge was born in 1871, but, leaving Ireland, it seemed as if he were to lose those talents which were marked in his brilliant youth. In Paris he wasted precious hours in the midst of a decadent Bohemianism, and, had it not luckily happened that Mr Yeats, in the year 1897, stumbled upon him there, it is possible that his name now would be unknown. With the insight of true genius Mr Yeats saw both his strength and his weakness, divined the good that was in him and his principal needs. Resolutely he counselled him, sending him off from the artistic and would-be artistic circles of the French capital, vitiated and over-civilized, to the barren stretches of moorland and mountain on the west coast of Ireland. After a few moments of doubt and perplexity Synge found his true medium. He listened to the [illegible]

[illegible] of the mountains and the moors, and he realized, as Wordsworth did before him, the natural majesty of their simple characters. He wandered over the barren stretches of heather, and listened to the ceaseless roar of the Atlantic [illegible] so that there came to him some [illegible] his heart filled [illegible] beauty which has always characterized the literary works of the Celt. His genius, however, was by no means wholly tragic. In the Aran Islands he still kept his grip upon reality, and, observing life, he was able to write his comic masterpiece, *The Playboy of the Western World*. In some ways this comedy is his most perfect work, but it has not the depth visible in the still comic, but more imaginative, little sketch [illegible]

Riders to the Sea is one of the [illegible]

theatre. It is simple, but grand in its simplicity. The scene is a lonely sea-coast cottage. Outside the ocean roars hungrily for its toll of human lives. Within Maurya sits remembering with bitterness its greedy tax-gathering, remembers the father and the grandfather and the four strong sons who have perished in the wild waste of seething waters. To her one son alone is left, and he will go to the horse-fair far off on the mainland. Maurya knows what it will mean; it will mean that men will carry in to her a dead son, snatched lifeless from the waves. So it comes to pass, and darkness settles down on the lonely cottage. The sea has claimed Maurya's all.

We are here in the presence of elemental things. The sea becomes a living force, a demon hungering after men; the figures in the cottage, weak as they may be in face of the physical power of the ocean, are titanic in their courage and grandeur. The tragedy goes back to primal emotions, to the struggle of man with nature. It is strong in its primeval intensity, the weakening force of civilization far off, distant, and unheard. The universality, the strength, the majesty, of this little work cannot too highly be praised, but these would not have taken such a hold of our hearts had Synge not gained a new medium in which to express his innermost feelings:

> *Maurya* [*raising her head and speaking as if she did not see the people around her*]. They're all gone now, and there isn't anything more the sea can do to me. . . . I'll have no call now to be up crying and praying when the wind breaks from the south, and you can hear the surf is in the east, and the surf is in the west, making a great stir with the two noises, and they hitting one on the other. I'll have no call now to be going down and getting Holy Water in the dark nights after Samhain, and I won't care what way the sea is when the other women will be keening. [*To Nora*] Give me the Holy Water, Nora; there's a small sup still on the dresser. [*Nora gives it to her.*
>
> *Maurya* [*drops Michael's clothes across Bartley's feet, and sprinkles the Holy Water over him*]. It isn't that I haven't prayed for you, Bartley, to the Almighty God. It isn't that I haven't said prayers in the dark night till you wouldn't know what I'd be saying; but it's a great rest I'll have now, and it's time, surely. It's a great rest I'll have now, and great sleeping in

the long nights after Samhain, if it's only a bit of wet flour we do have to eat, and maybe a fish that would be stinking.

[*She kneels down again, crossing herself, and saying prayers under her breath.*

Cathleen [*to an old man*]. Maybe yourself and Eamon would make a coffin when the sun rises. We have fine white boards herself bought, God help her, thinking Michael would be found, and I have a new cake you can eat while you'll be working.

The Old Man [*looking at the boards*]. Are there nails with them ?

Cathleen. There are not, Colum ; we didn't think of the nails.

Another Man. It's a great wonder she wouldn't think of the nails, and all the coffins she's seen made already.

Cathleen. It's getting old she is, and broken.

[*Maurya stands up again very slowly and spreads out the pieces of Michael's clothes beside the body, sprinkling them with the last of the Holy Water*

Nora [*in a whisper to Cathleen*]. She's quiet now and easy; but the day Michael was drowned you could hear her crying out from this to the spring well. It's fonder she was of Michael, and would anyone have thought that ?

Cathleen [*slowly and clearly*]. An old woman will be soon tired with anything she will do, and isn't it nine days herself is after crying and keening, and making great sorrow in the house ?

Maurya [*puts the empty cup mouth downwards on the table, and lays her hands together on Bartley's feet*]. They're all together this time, and the end is come. May the Almighty God have mercy on Bartley's soul, and on Michael's soul, and on the souls of Sheamus and Patch, and Stephen and Shawn [*bending her head*] ; and may He have mercy on my soul, Nora, and on the soul of every one is left living in the world.

[*She pauses, and the keen rises a little more loudly from the women, then sinks away.*

Maurya [*continuing*]. Michael has a clean burial in the far north, by the grace of the Almighty God. Bartley will have a fine coffin out of the white boards, and a deep grave surely. What more can we want than that ? No man at all can be living for ever, and we must be satisfied.

[*She kneels down again, and the curtain falls slowly.*

Deirdre of the Sorrows is a different, but no less arresting, drama. Here Synge has taken for his theme one of the most poignant and deeply tragic of all those lovely tales of Celtic love and mystery, a tale which has been utilized not only by himself, but also by Mr G. W. Russell and by Mr W. B. Yeats. The story tells how Deirdre, betrothed to Conchubor, King of Ulster, whom she loves not, finds

her mate in Naisi, son of Usna. Together the two fly to Scotland, and for seven blessed years they dwell in peace among the mountains of Alban. Conchubor still desires the beautiful Deirdre, and he sends a message of friendliness, bidding them return to Erin. Believing that all is well, they come back, and Conchubor, black treachery in his heart, slays Naisi's brothers, murders Naisi himself, and would seize Deirdre. Her spirit, however, is linked with that of her lover, and she dies with his dagger in her breast. No mere description can express the beauty with which Synge has clothed this legend. The dim figures, conceived in an ageless past and tinged with the roseate hue of romance, take life before us. We see the lovely maidenhood of the resolute Deirdre, waking to life when she hears the voice of her mate, Naisi. We see Naisi himself, strong and handsome, a fit mate for her. They know of the doom which hangs over their love, but they prefer the joy of some passing years to the endless misery of blasted lives. It is in the second act that Synge shows his full genius. When the messengers of Conchubor arrive Deirdre instinctively knows that the proffered friendship covers deceit and treachery. She would not return to her native land, and would persuade Naisi to remain in the mountains of Alban. But Naisi is not quite so completely filled with love as she. For her, love is everything. No doubt or question may enter in to break its tremendous intensity. Naisi, on the other hand, sometimes wonders whether after all this dream may not some time be shattered. Mayhap one day he would come to lose his love of Deirdre, and sorrow would consume their lives. Deirdre overhears his words to Fergus, and, true to her nature, she makes up her mind. They will return. Although death, she knows, awaits her, it is better to die when love is strong than to spend hopeless years in slow-consuming bitterness. They arrive at Conchubor's house. Naisi's brothers, far down in the woods, are treacherously set upon, and Naisi would go to save them. Deirdre knows it is death, and she tries to dissuade her lover, but he throws her off with cruel words. The canker of doubt, the canker of weariness, has poisoned his soul,

and their love is nearly sundered. The tumult ceases, and Naisi is dead. Lonely Deirdre stands before Conchubor, when a new turmoil arises. Fergus, the messenger of Conchubor, angered at the [illegible] his palace in flames, but C[illegible] but his desire of Deirdre. [illegible] of the flaming palace, she should put Naisi's dagger to her breast. She dies, as she had lived, his mate. It seems only a pity, but a tragic pity, that to those two death had not come even sooner, that Naisi's last words to her who had given all for his sake should have been words of cruel and bitter import.

Synge's other plays are not so tragic as these. *In the Sh*[illegible] life [illegible] A[illegible] is somewhat relieved when Daniel Burke, her husband, lays himself down on his bed of death. She is ill-suited to be a home-keeping housewife, and her emotions go forth to the wild moors and the grey road. For her these things are symbolized in the Tramp, to whom she gives her love. The Tramp and she sit chatting, jesting, and making plans, as Daniel Burke lies there in his cot by the wall. Nora, however, is not sufficiently in love with the Tramp, as a man, to keep herself from making advances to Mike Dara, who comes in to visit her. What success she would have had we cannot say, for the wife's newly found freedom is rudely broken by a sneeze from the corpse, and Daniel rises to confront her. He has only been playing her a trick, and now he knows her for what he suspected her to be. In rage he sends her out of the cottage, but she is content to go. The Tramp will be waiting for her down the road. This novel treatment of a theme used as long ago as 1701 in *The Funeral* gained for Synge an amount of opposition in Dublin. Here was an Irishman daring to suggest that any Irish wife could be faithless. Whatever Irishmen might say among themselves about Irish women, surely it was unnecessary to let all the world know that Noras might dwell in country cottages in the west. The

opposition was inspired by political motives, but politics frequently make us lose our sense of humour, and we ought to be able to appreciate the cynical charm of Synge's play without generalizing to make it a common attack upon all Erin's daughters. Besides, apart from national associations, it is one of the most cleverly written and ably constructed one-act dramas of modern times.

The Well of the Saints is equally cynical, but more symbolic in import. Comedy and imagination meet here in one, Synge having captured the true secret of that elusive quality, humour. The theme of the play is splendidly fantastic. There is a certain well, belonging to a certain saint, the waters of which can make the blind see. To this well come an old beggar and his wife. They have never seen one another, but they believe one another to be beautiful. The saint gives them the gift of light, and suddenly each sees the haggard, withered visage of the other. Harsh words end in blows, and they part. Darkness settles on them once more, and by chance they stumble on one another. They start talking, and gradually their old companionship revives. The divine gift of laughter eases over their troubles, and they are about to set off on their united travels again when the saint reappears. He will renew their vision. The thought, which before had been full of happiness and hope, is bitter to them, and the old beggar can do no more than throw the goblet of blessed water from the hands of the saint on to the ground. Darkness with visions and hope is better than light with mental bitterness.

Synge's other drama, *The Playboy of the Western World*, can hardly be dealt with satisfactorily in this section. It is a realistic, if fancifully conceived picture of the Irish peasantry, and belongs wholly to the realm of comedy. Even in treating of *In the Shadow of the Glen* we have departed sufficiently from the normal development of the symbolic drama, and it is his contribution to this *genre* which is Synge's greatest claim to fame. In after times he will be remembered most for *Riders to the Sea* and for *Deirdre of the Sorrows*. His skill in the delineation of character, his style, his sense of majesty, make him a

supreme tragic dramatist. It is not too much to say that in these plays this Irish author came close to the genius of Shakespeare. As the years pass he will unquestionably stand out more and more as one of the principal dramatic writers of our century.

Of those other Irish dramatists who adopted something of the same style Edward Martyn claims particular attention. From his first effort, *The Heather Field* (1899), to his last works of the years just before the War he provided the theatre with several plays of sterling excellence and [illegible]

a poet in temperament. He sees things beyond the ken of mortal man, and his whole life is bound up in an ideal. That ideal takes the form of a desire to reclaim the broad heather-lands on his estate. His money goes steadily; day by day he strives, and day by day the moorland baffles him. He gets a mortgage on his land; too poor now to pay it off, he sees with misery that all has gone to naught. Perhaps even now, had he been able to go away, he might have died happy, for grass had been springing where the heather was. But it was not his fate to die in peace. His son Kit, playing in the fields, gathers a bunch of heather, and brings it in laughing to his father. It is from the field which he has been striving to reclaim. A cry tells us that his heart is broken, and darkness settles on his spirit. His mind is smitten, and he dies a lunatic. It is evident here that we have more than a mere domestic play. Apart from the prevalent idealism of Carden Tyrrell himself, we [illegible] he [illegible] ge [illegible] nd [illegible]

Maeve (1900) is even more inwrought with the poetic spirit. The fairy world here takes shape before us, and the story is the story of Mr Yeats' *The Land of Heart's Desire.* Maeve O'Heynes is a replica of Mary Bruin;

ıer sister Finola is the companion of the old Bridget. To Maeve as to Mary comes the vision of the fairy folk, of Queen Maeve who lives her spirit life in a moorland haunt and who keeps in her hands all permanent beauty. Maeve O'Heynes, again like Mary, hears the call of two worlds, and the one proves stronger than the other. Here, more clearly even than in *The Heather Field*, Martyn shows himself as one of the school of poetic and symbolic playwrights. *An Enchanted Sea* (1902; printed 1904) carries on his development of what may be styled the imaginative-realist drama. The fairy world is here represented in Guy Font, who is not wholly human; his kin are in fairyland, and his spirit is in the waves of the sea. From the sea he came, and to the sea he returned.

Martyn's real strength is seen to lie in this strange union of reality and of the supernatural. Few dramatists have succeeded as he did in welding together into a complete whole these two spheres. At the same time his art in general shows a certain want of orientation. If he is mystically inclined in *Maeve*, he sinks to sordid actuality in *Grangecolman* (1912). If his supernatural atmosphere is perfectly achieved in *An Enchanted Sea*, it is somewhat vitiated in the comic atmosphere of *The Dream Physician* (1914). His fame in the future will undoubtedly depend upon the peculiar idealistic spirit that inspired *The Heather Field* and *Maeve*. No other writer of this time, save perhaps Sir James Barrie, had quite the same power of uniting these two contraries, although in the works of Lord Dunsany a similar union, with a different purpose, is masterly attained.

The principal sphere of Lord Dunsany (E. J. M. D. Plunkett, Baron Dunsany) is the world of fear. He has, certainly, dramas which do not deal with this subject, but no man has excelled him in arousing, by delicate touches, an emotion of terror, sometimes of awe. The means at his command are a subtle treatment of Oriental motives, and an exquisite artistic fancy. An Irishman, he has separated himself from the school of Synge and of Mr Yeats in finding no inspiration, or but little inspiration, in his native land.

Because of the delicacy of his touch Lord Dunsany's prim*métier* is the short one-act play. His subject-matter frequently prevents him from handling satisfactorily the longe three-act or five-act form. Of his works several hav singled themselves out as being of surpassing merit: *The Glittering Gate* (1909), *The Gods of the Mountain* (1911), *A Night at an Inn* (1916), *The Queen's Enemies* (1916), *The Laughter of the Gods* (1919), and *If* (1921). Many of these ... *The Queen's* ... ng ... nd

Scott-Fortescue, known as "The Toff" by his compan... He, William Jones ("Bill"), Albert Thomas, and Jacob Smith ("Sniggers") have stolen a precious jewel from the eye of an Eastern idol, and three priests of this god Klesh have tracked them to England. It is the plan of the Toff to lure them to a deserted spot and there deal with them. His plan succeeds so far as is humanly possible. One by one the three priests are slain by his devices. All seems well. Down they sit to pledge their own healths, until Smith, who goes out to get some water, returns in terror. As they try to get the truth from him, the idol itself steps in, groping like a man blind, picks up the ruby, and moves off. For a time there is silence.

The Toff. O, great heavens!

Albert [*in a childish, plaintive voice*]. What is it, Toffy?

Bill. Albert, it is that obscene idol [*in a whisper*] come from India.

Albert. It is gone.

Bill. It has taken its eye.

Sniggers. We are saved.

A Voice off [*with outlandish accent*]. Meestaire William Jones, Able Seaman.

[*The Toff has never spoken, never moved. He only gazes stupidly in horror.*

Bill. Albert, Albert, what is this? [*He rises and walks out. One moan is heard. Sniggers goes to the window. He falls back sickly.*]

Albert [*in a whisper*]. What has happened?

Sniggers. I have seen it. I have seen it. Oh, I have seen it!
[*He returns to the table.*

The Toff [*laying his hand very gently on Sniggers' arm, speaking softly and winningly*]. What was it, Sniggers?

Sniggers. I have seen it.

Albert. What?

Sniggers. Oh!

Voice. Meestaire Albert Thomas, Able Seaman.

Albert. Must I go, Toffy? Toffy, must I go?

Sniggers [*clutching him*]. Don't move.

Albert [*going*]. Toffy, Toffy. [*Exit.*

Voice. Meestaire Jacob Smith, Able Seaman.

Sniggers. I can't go, Toffy, I can't go. I can't do it. [*He goes.*

Voice. Meestaire Arnold Everett Scott-Fortescue, late Esquire, Able Seaman.

The Toff. I did not foresee it. [*Exit.*

CURTAIN

Nowhere is Lord Dunsany's power of evoking a sense of the uncanny more clearly shown, yet there seems a flaw in this play. The atmosphere is perfect save for the idol. We are too materialistic nowadays to accept the possibility that an Indian idol may take motion and seek for vengeance and although there is mystery in the calling forth of the names, we never forget the apparition. It might have been possible here to intensify the emotion of the play by making the idol seize the ruby from Sniggers when he was outside. The narration of the wonderful and the supernatural will always be more terrifying and awe-inspiring than the direct introduction of those forces. The same or a similar criticism may be levelled against *The Gods of the Mountain*, a strikingly ironical work in which some beggars who impose upon a superstitious township, are themselves turned to stone.

Nearly all of Lord Dunsany's dramas hint at more than is shown to us, and symbolism predominates in plays such as *The Glittering Gate.* His greatest triumph has so far been that peculiar work entitled *If*, a fantasy which reminds us

both of Edward Martyn's union of realism and the supernatural and of Sir James Barrie's *Dear Brutus*. The theme is, as with these plays, one of possibilities. "Let us," says Lord Dunsany in much the same spirit of fantasy, "Let [illegible]
pl[illegible]
Su[illegible]
the [illegible] have happened
to [illegible] an ordinary railway-station, and John Beal catches that train which he missed. Quite an ordinary thing, such as happens to every man. For Lord Dunsany, however, character is not destiny. Accidents too shape life, and John Beal is carried from one thing to another till he finds himself a chieftain king in the depths of Persia, wielding powers of life and death. Adventure surrounds him; he is grown from a commonplace business man into a being of romance. Sir James Barrie's *Dear Brutus* appeared in 1917; is it too much to suppose that *If* (1921) was written as an antidote to the former's philosophy of character?

(iii) Sir James Barrie

The only other dramatist of eminence who approached this style of play during the period was Sir James Barrie. Clearly there is something akin between his spirit and that, say, of Edw[illegible]
latter by his [illegible]
his satirical t[illegible]
at the world [illegible]
sentimentalis[illegible]
satirical, he is never bitter, though at times he may be trivial. He is a man who has done a great deal for the theatre, yet often we feel that he has not done all that he could have done, that he has not given us consistently of his best. If *Peter Pan* (1904) is a perennial delight, if *The Admirable Crichton* (1902) is a charming fantasy, if *A Slice of Life* (1910) is a delicious piece of literary satire, we feel that *The Little Minister* (1897) is little more than a sentimental

romance, that *Der Tag* (1914) is a potboiler not in very good taste, that *A Kiss for Cinderella* (1916) is mawkish and weak, and that *The Truth about the Russian Dancers* (1920) has little beyond topical interest. The fact is that Sir James Barrie has exploited his vein of whimsicality too much, and that his sentimental humour, at first novel and fresh, has degenerated into being a literary trick. Some of his topsy-turvy conceptions are little short of being works of genius, but it is no good criticism which can profess to enjoy plays which obviously have nothing of value in them. Idolatry may be pressed too far, as we know to our cost by the vast and often foolish Shakespeare literature, and Sir James Barrie himself might, perhaps, be the first to acknowledge that many of his plays stand upon a plane infinitely lower than his true masterpieces.

Of these masterpieces *Peter Pan* comes first in popular esteem. So well known is this fantasy of the boy who never grew up that it would be mere waste of space here to analyse its plot or to criticize it in detail. It has captured the hearts of young and of old alike, and will no doubt remain for many years a successful stage play. *The Admirable Crichton* (1902) presents a realistic counterpart. Instead of a fanciful theme, the author introduces us to an almost normal aristocratic English household, which is disturbed only by Lord Loam's queer endeavours to establish a common ground between his servants and himself. If Lord Loam is eccentric, Crichton is a perfectly model butler, cool, polite, and polished. Imagine these men, says the author, cast on a desert island, and in Lear's words, "Handy-dandy, which is the justice, which is the thief?" Lord Loam and his aristocratic relations prove themselves utterly useless; it is Crichton who alone possesses the requisite presence of mind and handiness. It is he who makes a camp-fire, he who builds a shelter, he who finds food. And, in doing all these things, he becomes the aristocrat. He is master of the situation. Gradually Lord Loam and the others, chilled in the darkness of the night, creep back to the fire and accept the altered conditions. Two years they stay there, and Crichton is just about to

bestow his now royal hand on Lady Mary when civilization returns in the shape of a rescue ship. They are all carried back to London. Lord Loam assumes his old position, and Crichton once more plays the part of the model butler. It is this power of conceiving changed [illegible] the silk-hatt [illegible] corduroys an [illegible] works their c [illegible]

This topsy-turvydom and queer blending of two worlds appears in an altered form in his more recent works *Dear Brutus* (1917) and *Mary Rose* (1920). In the former a group of ordinary people are shown to us lamenting that they might, in other circumstances, have been this or that. Let us, says Sir James Barrie, imagine what would have happened had some sprite been at hand to give them their wish. So we see them all in other circumstances, such as they might have lived in had fate given them what they desired. But hardly anything is changed. After all, they remain what they were. Character, says the author, is the only destiny. *Mary Rose* makes even greater use of the supernatural. Here Celtic legend has been called in, and Mary Rose, like that other Mary, her namesake in *The Land of Heart's Desire*, is carried away to the [illegible]

[illegible]

(1913), where a single man is shown at three stages of his career at a moment of crisis.

Less of this quality is apparent in the better-executed *What Every Woman Knows* (1908), a tale of woman's influence on man, and in *Quality Street* (1902), a subtle study of quiet age. Nor does it make its presence felt in the delicately worked one-act puzzle, *Shall We Join the Ladies?* (1922). In all of these, as in Barrie's other dramas, the [illegible]

[illegible]

(1905), with its good-humoured satire of stage tricks and its

delightful picture of Amy and her mother, is perfect for its sheer precision and waywardness. This subtlety and the other-world fantasy presented in some of his plays are the qualities which make Sir James Barrie at once typical of his age and a pioneer in a new dramatic style. While he has few direct followers he has taught many lessons to the English playwrights of to-day, and the symbolic drama owes much to him. At the same time his appeal is largely to the sentimental. There is little that is strong in his work, and we are inclined to feel that his contributions to the theatre fail beside the trenchant comedies of Mr Bernard Shaw.

His is an inspired, imaginative ordinariness; he shows the common man what the common man thinks he ought to be. Sir James Barrie's work is refined and restricted. Positive evil he will not introduce; the evil in *What Every Woman Knows* and *Dear Brutus* is potential only, the stage-direction in *Alice Sit-by-the-Fire* is characteristic: "*He is very young—too young to be a villain, too round-faced; but he is all the villain we can provide for* AMY." This is the result of his sentimental picture of life. Sir James Barrie will weep tears alike over a ghost and over ten little pink toes; he will proceed, in *Pantaloon* (1905), to sentimentalize the characters of the *commedia dell' arte*. In the last-mentioned play, when the author declares of Columbine that "it would be cruel to her to make her [Pantaloon's] wife because then she could not have a love-affair," the only comment of those who know the real Colombina is a cynical inquiry as to the reason of her inability to indulge in such flirtations.

CHAPTER IV

THE REVIVAL OF COMEDY AND THE THEATRE OF G. B. SHAW

Wilde and the Comedy of Manners

SERIOUS drama and comedy always flourish together: Greece had its Aristophanes as well as its Æschylus, and Elizabethan England found in Shakespeare a master of comedy and tragedy alike. It is not surprising, therefore, that those years which witnessed the development of the serious problem drama should have seen as well the revitalization of the play of laughter. The authors of this period are not so gloomily or so idealistically sombre-minded as were the poets of the early nineteenth century.

Synge, H. A. Jones, Sir Arthur Pinero, Mr Yeats, Mr Galsworthy, all knew the gift of laughter, and could turn from themes predominatingly tragic to the realm of comedy. This in itself marks a great advance in drama. Socrates, or Plato, was unquestionably right in finding the sources of tragedy and of comedy nearly allied, and in declaring that the great poet of the one type must necessarily have in him the qualities essential for success in the other. Indeed, there might be added to the reasons of dramatic decline in the early nineteenth century the fact that the poets knew not how to laugh. The predominating feature of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, Shelley, and Tennyson is their consistent seriousness. They took themselves and all the world seriously, and smiled gravely if they smiled at all. If Wordsworth tries for a moment to be sportive he becomes ridiculously commonplace; if Shelley tries to write a humorous piece, such as *Œdipus Tyrannus*, he becomes inexpressibly coarse. Only the lesser men of the time, such as Lamb and Hood, knew what it was to see the folly of life and the eternal discrepancy between ideal and realization.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century we discern this coarseness and almost indecent sportiveness giving way to a healthier tone. T. W. Robertson heralds its coming, just as he heralds the arrival of the problem play, and it rises to a culmination in the work of W. S. Gilbert and of Oscar Wilde. The one adopted as the favourite medium for the expression of his ideas the comic opera, the other occupied the realm of regular comedy, but both are definitely intellectual, satirical, and witty. Both belong to the tradition of the comedy of manners, revived by Sheridan, and largely forgotten in an age of romantic enthusiasm and impossible ideality.

The work of Gilbert and its importance has been already indicated. In some respects Gilbert with his operatic extravaganzas lies apart from the regular development of comic drama, and it may for a moment seem strange to connect with him the author of *Salome*, the leader of the 'Art for art's sake' cult, and the chief butt for Gilbert's satire in *Patience*. Wilde, however, does occupy this peculiar position, a position not unlike that assumed by Abraham Cowley in the seventeenth century. Just as Cowley, in an age of outworn romanticism, proved himself at one and the same time the leader of the metaphysical school in its last stages of decay and the inaugurator of the new age of reason and of heroic couplets, so Wilde in his poetry represents all that is worst in decadent romanticism, and in his comedies all that is vital in the rising comedy of manners. His serious works for the theatre are of little value, the silly *Vera, or, The Nihilists* (1883), the decadent *Duchess of Padua* (1891), and the notorious *Salome* (1892); it is his comedies that must claim the attention of any historian of the theatre. These comedies started with *Lady Windermere's Fan* (1892), continued with *A Woman of No Importance* (1893) and *An Ideal Husband* (1895), and finished with *The Importance of being Earnest* (1895). These plays, it is true, are not by any means purely intellectual. Several of them, in particular the first two, are filled with sentimentalism of the worst type and introduce problems of social life. In *Lady Windermere's Fan* we find that

Lord Windermere has married a high-spirited and proud girl, who is, although she is unaware of the fact, the daughter of Mrs Erlynne, a woman of sullied life but humane feeling. Mrs Erlynne, who has been blackmailing the unfortunate lord, demands to be invited to a party at his house, but his wife, who has heard gossip about the two, flares into a passion. She declares that she will strike Mrs Erlynne with her fan should she make her appearance at the party. Her courage, or her better feelings, prevents her from creating a public scandal, but her pride will not suffer her to live longer with her husband. She writes him a note and slips off to the bachelor rooms of a man who had professed himself her lover. Mrs Erlynne finds the letter, and, guessing the truth, opens it. Her horror is increased when she realizes that this is her own story over again. Frantic with fear she hurries off, and discovers her daughter alone in the room of her lover. Vainly for a time she argues with her; but at last she arouses the spirit of Lady Windermere and gets her away. She herself steps behind a curtain. A party of gay aristocrats enters the room. One of these spies the fan, and they are proceeding to jest on Lady Windermere's attachment for their friend, when Mrs Erlynne, conquering her own pride, steps forward and claims the fan as her own. It is the sacrifice which she can make for her daughter's honour. So, too, in *A Woman of No Importance* the theme is one eminently pathetic and sentimental, the unfortunate Mrs Arbuthnot claiming our full sympathy. *An Ideal Husband* is little less of a problem drama flavoured with sentimental motives.

All of these serious themes, however, Wilde has clothed with a profusion of wit, and one has the impression that in none of them did he believe very much. His paradoxes follow one another in swift volleys. He attempts to charm as Congreve did in 1700. The peculiar thing is that somehow he made the two elements unite together. Sentimentalism killed the comedy of manners in the early eighteenth century, but it does not destroy Wilde's similar gaiety. It may be that nowadays we have grown a trifle tired of the paradoxes and verbal sallies which are associated with

the names of Wilde and of Whistler, the excessive brilliance of scintillating if not intellectually profound minds, but for all that Wilde's plays will remain stock pieces in our theatres. There is something permanent in them, and they can never be relegated to oblivion. *The Importance of being Earnest* is a delightfully fantastic paradox of a plot, enlivened by brilliant dialogue, and even the more serious dramas possess a decided originality in treatment and in theme. Artificial they may be, but artificiality has always been a distinguishing mark of the comedy of manners.

With Wilde come many other authors, some of them the masters of the serious problem play. Thus H. A. Jones will be remembered not only for his *Saints and Sinners*, but also for *The Liars* (1897). There is truly in *The Liars* a type of laughter which has been heard in the English theatre but rarely since the times of Goldsmith and Sheridan: not the loud outburst of merriment such as greets the farce or the ludicrous music-hall turn, but the mellowed laughter which results from sheer intellectual enjoyment. *The Liars*, too, besides having this essence of genuine comic wit, possesses a well-developed although peculiarly constructed plot, which preserves its clarity even in the midst of the complications consequent on the introduction of character after character as the play develops. Of the unsatirical comedy of manners in his time H. A. Jones proved himself a skilful master.

More satirical is Mr Alfred Sutro, who has striven to give a tone of purpose to this comedy of social life. His failing probably arises from that endeavour. Frequently there is a discrepancy between the achievement and the aim. Mr Sutro's first play, *A Marriage has been Arranged*, was acted in 1902, and during the thirty odd years of his dramatic career he has written some twenty-two plays. Among his literary and popular triumphs must be numbered *The Walls of Jericho* (1904), *The Fascinating Mr Vanderveldt* (1906), and *The Choice* (1919). Mr Sutro's work is marked chiefly by his essentially natural dialogue. Without utilizing colloquialism and dialect he has succeeded in giving a lifelike effect to a dialogue which is truly brilliant. His

characters, on the other hand, do not quite harmonize with this conversation; frequently he descends, as in the Angela and Oliver of *The Fascinating Mr Vanderveldt*, to stock figures. His fundamental attitude to life, too, lacks firmness. In *The Perplexed Husband* (1911), for example, his treatment of the 'woman question' has not got beyond the stage of Sir Arthur Pinero's *The Weaker Sex*, written over twenty years earlier; one feels that he has not thoroughly grasped the society with which he is dealing and that in most of his characters, such as Kalleia and Dulcie Elstead, he is dealing with figures mechanically conceived to suit the purposes of his plot.

In this Mr Sutro forms a marked contrast to Hubert Henry Davies, who died in 1917. Davies's work dealt more with the fanciful and the psychological than with the depiction of manners and of wit. *Mrs Gorringe's Necklace* (1903), *Cousin Kate* (1903), and *The Mollusc* (1907) are all marked by these qualities. For subtle portraiture Davies was almost unrivalled in his time, *The Mollusc* in particular presenting a delicate study of a woman character, and his talent for infusing a romantic atmosphere into a realistic plot, without thereby descending into the morass of sentimentalism, was truly remarkable. This comedy is of particular interest because of its retention of the unity of place, although tendencies toward this retention can be traced in other modern dramatists alongside of contrary movements. In the modern drama we may have on the one hand the rapidly changing scene and the duration of generations in *Back to Methuselah*, while on the other we are confronted with the unity of place in *The Mollusc* or the double unities in Mr Shaw's *Getting Married*.

In spite of the tendency toward wit and satire, to be seen clearly enough later in the dramatic work of Mr A. A. Milne and in that of Mr C. K. Munro, the latter of whom has won success with *At Mrs Beam's* (1921) and with *Storm, or the Battle of Tinderly Down* (1924), there is a decided movement toward fantasy in treatment and in theme as we move onward from the year 1910. It appears in the artificiality and exaggeration of *At Mrs Beam's* no less than

in Mr H. V. Esmond's *Eliza comes to Stay* (1912) and in Arnold Bennett's *The Great Adventure* (1911). In the last-mentioned comedy a famous artist, Ilam Carve, allows himself to be thought dead. His valet, Albert Shawn, is buried with full honours in Westminster Abbey, and the artist settles down to a quiet Putney existence with Janet Cannot. The Bond-street picture-expert Ebag penetrates his disguise, and Westminster Abbey is trembling on the verge of a national disgrace. Relief comes through Lord Leonard Alcar, who patches up the differences between Carve and his cousin, and those between Ebag and the American collector Texel. The whole plot is delightfully impossible. We know, and Bennett knew, that this could never have happened, yet the treatment is realistically satiric, somewhat in the Shavian style. An element of farce, it has been said, must enter into every true comedy, and farce in our own times is taking the form of topsy-turvy fancy.

This fantasy, allied with realism, appears often in the work of George Calderon, whose *The Fountain* (1909) deserves remembrance, and in that of Harold Chapin, author of *Augustus in Search of a Father* (1910), *The Marriage of Columbine* (1910), and *The Philosopher of Butterbiggins* (1915). Chapin's style is lighter than those we have been considering, but is marked by a delicate touch and true sympathy. Mr Allan Monkhouse adopts the same style in *Mary Broome* (1911), *The Education of Mr Surrage* (1912), and his one-act piece, *The Grand Cham's Diamond* (1918). The last-mentioned playlet, employing to excellent effect the surroundings and dialect of a lower middle-class London suburb, throws into the midst of an ordinary setting a wave of romance, which takes shape as a great diamond stolen from the "Grand Cham." Mrs Perkins would keep it when it comes flying through their window, for in her commonplace breast she nourishes a craving for something beyond their narrow surroundings, but it is taken back by her daughter's *fiancé* Albert, who is a detective. Quietly they all settle down again, and the bird of romance is flown.

Miss Perkins. I don't know what Albert'll think of you.

Mrs Perkins. 'E's not going to marry me, thank 'eaven.

Mr Perkins. D'y' want t' know what I think of yer ?

Mrs Perkins. Go on ! Y've no 'magernation.

Miss Perkins. I never thought to be ashamed of my own mother.

Mr Perkins. Wantin' in the very el'ments of morality. I wonder 'ow Sossiety'd get on if they was all like you.

Mrs Perkins. Polly, put up that blind. It's a bit chilly with them broken panes.

Miss Perkins. Most unladylike as well.

[*They settle down into their chairs again. Mrs Perkins takes up her darning and Mr Perkins the paper. After putting up the blind Miss Perkins returns to her puzzle.*

Mrs Perkins. 'Ow much did y' say it was worth, Pa ?

Mr Perkins [*gruffly*]. Never mind.

Mrs Perkins. Well, I 'ad my bit o' fun for onct.

CURTAIN

Here is no struggle of generations, youth against age ; it is age itself which pines for romance.

Mr John Galsworthy in *Joy* (1907), a play in which a daughter cannot realize her mother's love-affairs until she falls in love herself, and in *The Little Man* (1915) captures something of the same style. *The Little Man* is "a farcical morality." The characters are individually portrayed, and there is realism to the extent of an Austrian railway buffet, a Continental train, and German *Polizei*, but the whole atmosphere is one of fancy and impossibility. So, too, with the work of Mr Rudolf Besier. *Don* (1909) and *Lady Patricia* (1911) are delightful admixtures of these two qualities. Virtuosity and topsy-turvy idealism are Mr Besier's chief fields, and few have succeeded in painting them so perfectly and with such subtle grace. Mr Granville-Barker's charming *Prunella* (1904 ; written in collaboration with Mr Laurence Housman) captures the same atmosphere in its delightful lines and quaint setting.

In the same style are written Mr Louis Napoleon Parker's *Disraeli* (1911), *Pomander Walk* (1912), and *A Minuet* (1922), where an effort is made to secure, without an undue infusion of sentimentality, a similar impression of delicacy and of quaintness. Perhaps Mr Graham Moffat's *Bunty*

pulls the Strings (1911) and *A Scrape o' the Pen* (1912) may be mentioned alongside of these, and with them Mr Harold Brighouse's *Lonesome-like* (1911), *Spring in Bloomsbury* (1911), and *Followers* (1915), as well as Mr Eden Phillpotts' successfully revived *The Farmer's Wife* (1916).

Wit, satire, display of social manners, therefore, all run parallel with another movement, which deals with fancy and things impossible. Mr George Bernard Shaw and Sir James Barrie stand at the head of these two movements, even if at times the two strains seem confused and for a moment Mr Shaw becomes Sir James Barrie and Sir James Barrie becomes Mr Shaw. It is probable that the comedy of the future will be distinguished mainly by this comparatively modern development of fantastic realism, where dialect and living characters keep us tied to the ordinary world and where imagination bears us to enchanted realms, to "things impossible and cast beyond the moon."

(ii) J. M. Synge and the Irish School

In this rapid survey of the comic endeavour during the period nothing has so far been said of the Irish comic theatre. Though the majority of the works produced at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, have been tragic or gloomy there have been sufficient comedies written for that theatre during the last thirty years to merit their independent treatment. Synge himself, who found tragic expression for his thoughts in *Riders to the Sea* and in *Deirdre of the Sorrows*, cast his *In the Shadow of the Glen* as a comedy and wrote his greatest masterpiece, *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907), in a laughing strain. The plot, perhaps, savours of impossibility, but for all that *The Playboy* is a realistic work, so realistic that it aroused a wild storm of indignation from the patriotic camp when it first appeared. The plot is a simple one, but delightfully absurd. At a small Irish village there arrives a callow youth, one Christy Mahon, who is thought to have killed his father. Away from the reality, all who hear his grandiloquent tale magnify him into a hero, and Pegeen Flaherty goes so far as to cast

off her loutish *fiancé*, Shawn, in favour of this grand and picturesque figure. Christy's joy, however, is soon cut short by the arrival of his father, who chastises him soundly and leaves the inn. Pegeen finds her hero to be a man of very mortal clay, and her taunting words express her own disappointment and bitterness of heart. Her tirade fires Christy with a real glow of courage; he rushes outside [illegible] Christy, they seize and bind him, with intent to give him over to justice. But old Mahon is a sturdy peasant, and even his son's fury has not succeeded in knocking the life out of him. In he comes again, and there ensues an uproarious scene in the course of which the father takes the side of his son, and off they trudge in fair good humour from Flaherty's house. Shawn now thinks that Pegeen will return to him, but her mind has been filled with a vision. She has lost the only Playboy of the Western World, and Shawn is dismissed with a good sound cuff on the ear to pay him for his lack of spirit and for his impertinence.

The Playboy of the Western World is, unquestionably, the chief masterpiece in comedy with which the Irish theatre has so far provided us, but there are many other plays which come near to catching its broad humour and free sense of fun. Mr Lennox Robinson has produced two charming works of this kind, *The White-headed Boy* (1916) and *The Far-off Hills* (1931); even Mr Yeats, mystic and poet though he be, has written an excellent satiric comedy in *The Pot of Broth* (1902) and has infused into many of his more serious plays scenes of a humorous nature. The chief exponent of comedy in the Irish school is Lady I. A. Gregory. A few tragic pieces she wrote, but her main tendencies were toward the comic, and her knowledge of Irish life and character enabled her to write a series of delightfully entertaining and amusing plays. Like so many of the English dramatists she delighted in the interweaving of fantasy and real life. Her *dramatis personæ* are drawn from

actuality, but her plots frequently turn on some impossible and imaginative theme. So, too, she loved exaggeration, and employed that exaggeration with perfect surety to secure her effects. Her great strength, however, came from her contact with the folk. Just as Synge found inspiration in the maybe coarse but primitively strong and untouched qualities of the Irish peasantry, writing almost in a medievally blunt strain *The Tinker's Wedding* (1909), so Lady Gregory has gone to the people for her chief power. *Spreading the News* (1904), *Hyacinth Halvey* (1906), *The Jackdaw* (1907), and other of her plays depend entirely for their value on this close contact with the folk, and in thus showing how much of worth lies in the primitive emotions of a comparatively uncivilized community she and Synge have given an inestimable gift to our literature. Under Wilde and Sir Arthur Pinero the drama was rapidly becoming vitiated, because wholly intent upon an over-cultured and often morally degenerate society. The Irish writers, no less than the Russian writers, have displayed to us what artistic and morally healthy elements may be gained by a study of less sophisticated circles.

In one particular direction, too, Lady Gregory stands forward as an innovator. In his *Pompey the Great* (1910) Mr Masefield endeavoured to reinterpret the salient facts of a great historical epoch in the light of modern times. Somewhat satirically Mr Shaw has done the same in *The Man of Destiny* (1897) and in *Cæsar and Cleopatra* (1899). Lady Gregory, writing of historical events in *The Canavans* (1906) and in *The White Cockade* (1905), has striven to show what excellent comedy can be achieved, without any satirical purpose, by a similar treatment of ancient times. To this type of drama, Lady Gregory herself has given the title "Folk-history," and she has written enough to show that there are here infinite possibilities for modern dramatists who would return to the inspiration of the people. Virtually, we are back once more in that epoch which gave birth to the author of *George a Greene* and to those many writers of chronicle-history plays of whom Shakespeare is immeasurably the greatest.

There are certain signs that the Irish drama may witness in the future a marked development of this comic strain. It is certainly difficult to laugh when the heart is bleeding, and Cathleen Ni Houlihan has called only too many of her sons away from art and away from life to high emprise, and bitterness, and death. With the settlement of recent years, however, there is at least the possibility that a happier note may return, and maybe that happier note will echo the strains of Synge, of Lady Gregory, and of Mr Lennox Robinson.

(iii) George Bernard Shaw

Apart from all the others stands Mr George Bernard Shaw. He was, in the eighteen-nineties, one of those who called back the drama to the ways of realism, yet throughout the whole of his career he displayed a strange love of the fantastic and the absurd; he was father of the theatre of ideas in England, seriously preaching his sermons on social follies and social vices, yet no one gave more to the drama of his time in the way of wit, fun, and humour. Paradoxically, too, he is master of the old generation and the new; it may be that he had to struggle to make himself heard in the playhouse, it may be that to-day some of the younger school react against his work; but the fact remains—Mr Shaw was the outstanding figure in the theatre from 1890 to 1920, and he is the outstanding figure in the theatre of to-day. In the series of plays from *Widowers' Houses* in 1892 to *Too True to be Good* in 1932 there may be many weak, trivial, and foolish pieces, yet no man in our time has sustained such a freshness and vitality as he. Even at the age of seventy he can startle the conventionalists and experiment in new dramatic forms.

So far as the content of his plays is concerned, the keynotes to Mr Shaw's work are rationalism and what may be styled critical rebellion. In the plays produced before 1920 he attacks things as they are because, by the application of reason, he sees them as vicious, useless, or foolish. Whatever, then, is sentimental and romantic he has despised

s false. Whatever is contrary to the dictates of reason he as opposed. Whatever is set up as a fetish by the un- ninking mass he has ruthlessly destroyed. His socialism not of the emotional kind. He is not inspired with a reat pity for 'the under-dog' as Mr Galsworthy is. Rather oes he look round him, and witnessing the many follies n our management of life he strives to remedy the abuses, ot by serious problem plays, but by turning topsy-turvy ur social state. Sir James Barrie delights in revealing he other side of the picture, not for any social purpose, but imply because it amuses him. Mr Shaw loves to show hat other side in order that he may point a moral. Com- lacency and romantic artificiality are the things he detests. He objects to the typical assumptions of the sentimental dramatists just as much as he objects to the typical assump- ions of the sentimentalists in real life. Everything, there- ore, comes within the sphere of his caustic pen—literature, rt, medicine, religion, politics, racial prejudice, social tandards. He is the great destroyer of evil in our modern ge, and out of his destructiveness he seeks to lead us toward a newer, fresher, and more constructive thought.

The weapon which Mr Shaw uses with greatest precision s the weapon of satire. He is ruthless and he cuts deep. There is for him no question of compromise or of sparing. Like many satirists Mr Shaw has moved from a more or ess normal world to a world of fantasy. He starts with *The Philanderer* (acted 1898; printed 1905) and *Candida* (1895), and moves through *Androcles and the Lion* (1913) and *The Inca of Perusalem* (1917) or *Annajanska, the Bolshevik Empress* (1918), to *Back to Methuselah*. In analysing this satirical strain and its gradual development, it is almost impossible for us, in Mr Shaw's own presence and in such close proximity to those things against which he tilts, to formulate any exhaustive or final summary of his position in the history of drama and of thought. Many men have said profound or witty things about Mr Shaw, but time only can place him in that particular position in the development of the theatre which it is his to fill. All that may be done here is to glance at one or two of his chief plays in the hope

that we may find some common qualities to aid us in the estimate of his work.

Widowers' Houses, Mrs Warren's Profession (1898; printed 1902), and one or two others of his works belong almost solely to the sphere of the problem play. In the first he attacks that chief evil in our cities, the slum-tenement, but the play is not merely a one-sided assault at a national disgrace. Mr Shaw looks deeper than most. He sees the enormous complexity of our modern civilization. It is no longer, as the romanticists thought, a story of evil landlords and oppressed poverty. Such a statement of the case, to Mr Shaw, seems not only inadequate but ridiculous, not only false but positively mischief-making. If we are to think of reforming the slums we must strike deeper than the landlord; we must go to the roots of society itself. Accordingly, he takes as his hero one Trench, who objects to the dowry of his *fiancée*, Blanche Sartorius, because it has come from the rents torn out of the hands of the poor. Trench is an idealist, but he has to face cold reality when he finds that his own money is largely tainted by the same evils against which he battled Gradually he is drawn into the net, and at the close of the play he is plotting with Sartorius and his rent-collector to secure more money on his property. The same pitiless exposure of real facts is poured into *Mrs Warren's Profession*, a drama which takes as its theme the question of prostitution. Dragging away one by one the veils which have been cast over this subject by idealistic romanticists and by men of the world alike, Mr Shaw tries to regard it in the light of reason, and finds the only solution in banishing emotion and sentimentalism, in cutting out of life all the romantic glow which so often clothes foul brutality, in establishing a new age of intellect and of logical thought. So he passes from one theme to another. In *Arms and the Man* (1894) it is war and romantic soldiering he would tilt against. Even then he could see that war was no longer a thing of banners and glory, such a thing as Tamburlaine and Othello and Sir Walter Scott saw it, but a dull, sordid affair of brute strength and callous planning out.

The Bulgarian Sergius is the representative of an outworn convention, and Captain Bluntschli, the Swiss matter-of-fact warrior, is the symbol of present-day conditions. *Candida* carries us back to domestic problems. A good-looking, but somewhat elderly, woman is adored by a foolishly poetic youth. Her husband, a philanthropic and energetic clergyman, is thrown into despair, for he thinks that poetry may win the day. But Candida gives herself to him who is weakest, and the weakest is her husband.

Thus does Mr Shaw pass through the whole gallery of stock portraits—portraits of warriors, of philanthropists, of poets, of tyrants, of rent-collectors—and, turning the canvases on the wall, he shows that some impish artist has painted a reverse on every one, and the reverse is nearer to life than the long-treasured and long-admired obverse. Coming to history, he takes Napoleon and the great Queen of Egypt, the glorious lover who will give her whole life for passion, and he shows them both as ordinary man and woman. Napoleon in *The Man of Destiny* (1897) is nothing more than a successful captain, easily attracted by a pair of bold eyes; Cleopatra in *Cæsar and Cleopatra* (1899) is no more than a little madcap of a girl, tyrannized over by an old nurse, and the conqueror of the world has only cunning and sagacity to bear him through many trials. Perhaps Mr Shaw has taken a hint here from Shakespeare's earlier satire in *Troilus and Cressida.* And then there is the convention of man's strength and of woman's weakness, the eternal courtship and wooing, the man's question and the woman's bashful answer. "Is this really so?" is Mr Shaw's query, and in *Man and Superman* (1903) he strives to show it is not. With exquisite fancy he takes Don Juan as his hero, and attempts to display the other (and real) portrait of that voluptuary and ruiner of women. The main part of the story tells how Ann, driven by the life force, tricks Jack Tanner, the revolutionary and free-thinker, into marriage. Tanner knows perfectly well what she is about, although the poetic Octavius would still regard woman as an angel sent from on high. Poor little "Ricky-ticky-tavy" gets the worst of it, or, as Tanner

would have said, the best of it. Ann, although she may play with him as a cat plays with a mouse, wants Tanner himself, and even a modern automobile with the good services of the Cockney chauffeur, Enry Straker, cannot save him. Tanner and Octavius are set in close opposition. The one is the clear-eyed modernist, the other the romantic poet:

Octavius. I cannot write without inspiration. And nobody can give me that except Ann.

Tanner. Well, hadnt you better get it from her at a safe distance? Petrarch didnt see half as much of Laura, nor Dante of Beatrice, as you see of Ann now; and yet they wrote first-rate poetry—at least so Im told. They never exposed their idolatry to the test of domestic familiarity; and it lasted them to their graves. Marry Ann; and at the end of a week youll find no more inspiration in her than in a plate of muffins.

Octavius. You think I shall tire of her!

Tanner. Not at all: you dont get tired of muffins. But you dont find inspiration in them; and you wont in her when she ceases to be a poet's dream and becomes a solid eleven-stone wife. Youll be forced to dream about somebody else, and then there will be a row.

Octavius. This sort of talk is no use, Jack. You dont understand. You have never been in love

Tanner. I! I have never been out of it. Why, I am in love even with Ann. But I am neither the slave of love or its dupe. Go to the bee, thou poet: consider her ways and be wise. By Heaven, Tavy, if women could do without our work, and we ate their children's bread instead of making it, they would kill us as the spider kills her mate or as the bees kill the drone. And they would be right if we were good for nothing but love.

In the end Tanner is captured. Ann marries him even as he protests solemnly that he is not a happy man. The realism of this play is cleverly interwoven with some purely fantastic elements. Tanner and Straker are captured by some brigands as they motor over the mountains, and in the evening, as we listen to Mendoza's nonsensical rimes:

O wert thou, Louisa,
The wife of Mendoza,
Mendoza's Louisa, Louisa Mendoza,
How blest were the life of Louisa's Mendoza!
How painless his longing of love for Louisa!

we fall asleep, and dream of a place where there is "no sky, no peaks, no light, no sound, no time nor space, utter void." We are in hell, conversing with Don Juan (who is startlingly like Jack Tanner), the statue which caused his death, and the devil. Don Juan is the embodiment of the intellectual philosophy of life. Reason for him is predominant:

> That is why intellect is so unpopular. But to Life, the force behind the Man, intellect is a necessity, because without it he blunders into death. Just as Life, after ages of struggle, evolved that wonderful bodily organ the eye, so that the living organism could see where it was going and what was coming to help or threaten it, and thus avoid a thousand dangers that formerly slew it, so it is evolving to-day a mind's eye that shall see, not the physical world, but the purpose of Life, and thereby enable the individual to work for that purpose instead of thwarting and baffling it by setting up shortsighted personal aims as at present. Even as it is, only one sort of man has ever been happy, has ever been universally respected among all the conflicts of interests and illusions . . . the philosophic man: he who seeks in contemplation to discover the inner will of the world, in invention to discover the means of fulfilling that will, and in action to do that will by the so-discovered means.

The philosophic man is Mr Shaw's ideal; he has lately shown us his own constructive view of life in *Back to Methuselah.*

It is impossible here to do more than mention some of the innumerable facets of existence which Mr Shaw has illuminated with his satire and his vision. In *The Devil's Disciple* (1897) and *The Shewing-up of Blanco Posnet* (1909) he has taken religion for his theme, varying his treatment of that theme in *Major Barbara* (1905). *The Devil's Disciple* is a delicious satire at once of romantic melodrama and of puritanical faith hardened into mere convention. The devil's disciple, for all his irreligious and blasphemous utterances, is the only one among the crowd of canting sinners who has a glimpse of diviner fire in him. Even the minister-husband is more of a soldier than a servant of peace. This play is especially noteworthy for the interesting portrait it contains of General Burgoyne, soldier, playwright, and wit of the late eighteenth century. In

John Bull's Other Island (1904) Mr Shaw turns good-humouredly to banter both English and Irish prejudices. He can see the follies of both, and again he casts the pure light of reason upon a problem complicated by English insularity and Irish passion and idealism. *The Doctor's Dilemma* (1906) casts the same cold searchlight upon the medical profession. "Strip off all sentimentality," the author again cries; "judge things as they are, not as they might or ought to be; only so can you achieve salvation." *Getting Married* (1908) throws equal ridicule, instinct with sense and reason, upon the discrepancies of our marriage system, and *The Dark Lady of the Sonnets* (1910), trivial as it is, is full of shrewd wit and comment on a problem made hazy and bewildering by a mass of romantic critics. *Androcles and the Lion* (1913) searchingly casts light on early religious faith and religious experience; *Pygmalion* (1913) is a brilliant study of contemporary social conventions.

In all this intellectual treatment of literature, of history, and of social life the prime thing we note is the penetrating vision of the writer. There is no stopping for him half-way; he is brave enough to carry his sight as far as it will reach. The unknown terrors bring no fear to him; he is calm and restrained in the consciousness of his own intellectual eminence. It is not too much to say that intellectually he bestrides our modern thought like a colossus. Filled with a deep horror of misery, imbued with a sense of the unhealthiness and abject poverty, mental and physical, of the slums, he does not find solace in a weak humanitarianism or an equally weak sentimental philanthropy. He pierces down below the surface and sees that a Trench and a Major Barbara are of no avail, and that even these must bow to take sustenance from the things they despise. The great constructive element in his work is not his philosophy of age, as expressed in *Back to Methuselah*, but this inimitable power of searching to the very roots of things for the causes of decay and disintegration. Whereas others would be content to nip off a withered bud or to give a spray of disinfectant, Mr Shaw desires to transplant and give a change of soil.

From the literary point of view Mr Shaw's drama means a great deal to the English theatre. Not only has he taught a new incisiveness of utterance, and given what is virtually a new dramatic dialogue, but he has also provided a fresh principle of characterization. The characters in the romantic plays were not so much stereotyped as framed on a false principle. Mr Shaw has shown men how to draw characters according to the dictates of reason. Instead of timid heroines, we find intellectually daring women; instead of strong heroes, men lacking power and self-will; instead of fantastically model clergymen, ministers who feel more at ease in buff-coat and jack-boots; instead of impossible villains, men who are themselves the tools of society. Even beyond this the debt of the modern drama to him is great. He showed new methods of fusing fantasy and reality; he was constantly experimenting in fresh dramatic devices. Above all, he made the drama, more than ever it had been before, literature. Without taking away from the theatrical quality of his work, he added to stage direction and to preface such additional matter that even in the study his works take shape before us. Seeing the rivalry of the novel, he has dared to step into the enemy's camp and take from him some of his most jealously guarded devices. It is not only that Mr Shaw gives us more details than are commonly given concerning the settings of his plays; he goes into the past history of his characters. Thus, at the opening of *Man and Superman*, we are treated to a full-length picture of Roebuck Ramsden seated in his study. Chairs and tables, neckties and waistcoats, are described to us, and then:

> *He has not been out of doors yet to-day! so he still wears his slippers, his boots being ready for him on the hearthrug. Surmising that he has no valet, and seeing that he has no secretary with shorthand notebook and a typewriter, one meditates on how little our great burgess domesticity has been disturbed by new fashions and methods, or by the enterprise of the railway and hotel companies which sell you a Saturday to Monday of life at Folkestone as a real gentleman for two guineas, first class fares both ways included.*
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> *How old is Roebuck? The question is important on the threshold of a drama of ideas; for under such circumstances everything depends*

on whether his adolescence belonged to the sixties or to the eighties. He was born, as a matter of fact, in 1839, and was a Unitarian and Free Trader from his boyhood, and an Evolutionist from the publication of the Origin of Species. Consequently he has always classed himself as an advanced thinker and fearlessly outspoken reformer.

It is unquestionable that this device has added to the popularity of drama. After a few years of hesitancy in the publishing of plays,[1] the newer writers sought for a double public. Without ignoring the theatre, as the poets of the past had done, they made an appeal also to the many readers of novels and of poetry. Their stage directions and their prefaces alike were penned for this purpose, and as a consequence the drama as a whole became ever more and more a part of literature. In thus re-establishing the literary drama the modern writers were striking out and away from the trivial and vain romantic theatre of the preceding decades, and their work owes a tremendous debt to the activity and boldness of Mr Shaw, whose *Plays Pleasant and Unpleasant* (1898) and *Plays for Puritans* (1900) fully established the drama alongside of the novel as a popular literary form.

In thus noting what has become a general modern tendency, we must observe certain disadvantages attendant upon it. While Mr Shaw's stage directions are not meant to serve quite the same purpose as those in Mr Hardy's *The Dynasts*, which was "intended simply for mental performance and not for the stage," it is inevitable that they should tend toward a loss of power in the dialogue of the play. When a dramatist finds he can express his thoughts through the preface and through the stage directions he may very possibly be led into avoiding the more subtle and more difficult method of revealing them through the words of his characters, and he may be drawn still farther to the introduction of scenes unfitted for the theatre. Sir James Barrie perhaps shows a still completer development of this tendency. Not content with elaborating the stage

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direction, he couches his whole drama in the form of a narrative, banishing altogether the stage directions of Mr Shaw's fancy and putting the language of his characters into inverted commas as though he were penning a novel. The result is to be seen in *The Old Lady shows her Medals* (1917), in which we get a final scene entirely unsuited for stage performance. The play once more is being led away from the theatre. Mr Granville-Barker too has succumbed to this only too fatally easy device. In *The Madras House* he introduces one of his characters thus:

> *Philip's wife is an epitome of all that æsthetic culture can do for a woman. More: she is the result—not of thirty-three years—but of three or four generations of refinement. She might be a race-horse! Come to think of it, it is a very wonderful thing to have raised this crop of ladyhood. Creatures, dainty in mind and body, gentle in thought and word, charming, delicate, sensitive, chaste, credulous of all good, shaming the world's ugliness and strife by the very ease and delightsomeness of their existence; fastidious—fastidious—fastidious! also in these latter years with their attractions more generally salted by the addition of learning and humour. Is not the perfect lady perhaps the most wonderful achievement of civilization, and worth the cost of her breeding, worth the toil and the helotage of all the others?*

One thing a study of such Shavian stage-directions teaches us—that Mr Shaw is a consummate dramatic artist. Clearly a technical device of this kind is apt to make the play untheatrical in that the author, failing to express his meaning through the words of his characters, is inclined to fall back upon this easier, because more direct, method of explaining his purposes.[1] It has been said by many that Mr Shaw was not a born dramatist, that he had merely seized on the theatre because it gave him a platform from which to preach his sermons, that his plays are little more than illustrations of his prefaces. This view, it is almost certain, must be rejected by future historians of the drama. No writer of our time has shown such a vivid and appreciative

[1] It is interesting to note that the technique of the wireless play is operating healthily against the potential evils of this modern device. Mr Reginald Berkeley's *The Quest of Elizabeth* (1926) thus opens with the stage-direction, "*The scene, time and characters become apparent as the play proceeds.*"

sense of the theatre as Mr Shaw, and it is because of the theatrical qualities in his work that his plays will survive. His philosophy may be smiled at a century hence, and his 'problems' may seem then problems no more, but his dramas—at least half a dozen of them—must retain their appeal because of the way in which he has made use of effects which are theatrically striking and because of the incisive beauty of his dialogue. Essentially Mr Shaw is a playwright, not a philosopher.

PART VIII

THE MODERN DRAMA (1920–32)

CHAPTER I

THE FORCES OF REVOLT

BY the year 1920 the forces of realism had spent themselves. It had been necessary that the powerfully buttressed citadel of artificiality which had been the stronghold of the nineteenth-century theatre should be overthrown, and such an overthrowing could come only by the substitution of something definitely concrete. The realist found his standards in the life around him; that life gave him something by reference to which his efforts and the efforts of his companions might be judged. Because men were tired of the old artificiality, and because they desired a form of art deeper rooted in human values, realism flourished for fully three decades.

At the end of that time, however, there came the need of change. Even within the period of realism itself—even among the great masters of the realist style—the need for something more had already made itself apparent. Ibsen's later plays, as we have noted, are suffused with a peculiar symbolism which raises them above ordinary realist conventions. Strindberg, author of *The Father* (1887), turned in 1907 to write *The Spook Sonata*. The work of Stanislavski in the Moscow Art Theatre led directly toward the development of extra-realist tendencies in the studio of Vachtangov. The work of Mr Gordon Craig set a new standard and indicated a new ideal. In France M. Maeterlinck, with *Pelléas et Melisande* (1892) and *L'oiseau bleu* (1908), had placed himself in opposition to the then prevailing mood. In Ireland poetic tendencies produced the masterpieces of Synge, the romantically inclined verse dramas of Mr Yeats. And in England, besides the fantastic drama of Sir James

Barrie, the symbolic forms assumed by Lord Dunsany's plays, the imaginative treatment of Mr Gilbert Cannan's dramas, and the more traditional verse tragedies of Stephen Phillips, Mr Bernard Shaw had shown, from his earliest days in the theatre, a dissatisfaction with realism alone. Such anti-realist tendencies, on the other hand, had been distinctly subordinate to the prevailing movement toward naturalism. They displayed the inherent weakness of the naturalistic style, and they served to aid those who later sought for an escape from realism; but from this work the theatre of 1890–1920 does not take its tone.

To seize on any particular year as marking a change is, of course, to adopt somewhat artificial standards, but the year 1920 does seem to form a kind of dividing line between the new and the old. The clearest expression of the movements of revolt (or of reaction) is to be seen in Germany, where a leaning toward 'schools' of authors makes the tracing of prevailing aims easier than in England. Fundamentally, it may be said that men became dissatisfied with the somewhat gloomy and unexalted treatment of life such as the realists had shown. The realists, in general, either had chosen to depict life with a kind of despairing acceptance of its miseries and its littleness or had indulged in revolt against merely social conventions. Thus, the 'generations' theme, which we have seen expressed in various English plays, inspired Herr Walther Hasenclever to write *Der Sohn* (1914), and the 'general revolt' theme produced Herr Sorge's *Der Bettler* (1912), Herr Toller's *Die Wandlung* (1919), and Herr Wildgans' *Dies Irae* (1919). This revolt, however, was mainly negative and destructive; it seldom escaped from a somewhat pessimistic and despairing spirit of hopelessness. Meanwhile, in life around men felt themselves being more and more dragged down by the machine-world which they had themselves called into being. Materialism had triumphed. In many minds now sprang the desire to achieve something positive, to affirm the existence of something more important than the merely material, to testify to the worth of spiritual values. Some of such men found a way through Impressionism. To

define literary or artistic terms of this kind is a hard task, but it may be said that the impressionist is one who endeavours, partly by stepping aside from reality, to establish an individual work of personal impressions. One kind of impressionism will differ from another, but in all there is the emphasis on the subjective reception of impressions of this kind, and in all there is an attempt to escape from the more terrible and tyrannous aspects of objective reality. The impressionist may be a reviver of romantic terms such as M. Rostand, or a dreamer such as M. Maeterlinck, or an exploiter of the occult such as Mr Yeats; rarely, if ever, will he accept material life as it exists. Quite clearly, the danger of this impressionist tendency is that it may lead to a certain preciousness and to a deliberate withdrawing of literary groups from the surrounding world of ordinary men and women.

Against this school came the expressionists, whose creed bade them accept life and at the same time to urge upon men the glory of man. The expressionist technique generally demands the placing of character types on the stage rather than individuals. It desires no approach toward naturalism, where separate personalities are depicted in terms as near to objective reality as may be possible; it aims at presenting before audiences the fundamentals of human nature in generalized forms. Above all, it preaches the importance of the human as opposed to the mechanical. These qualities are well shown in such a play as Herr Georg Kaiser's *Gas* (translated by Mr Ashley Dukes, 1923), where the figures are typical, the language is devoid of naturalistic terms, the war between man and the machine is emphasized. In Germany the school has gained strength through Herr Ernst Toller's *Masse-Mensch* (translated by Mr Dukes, 1924), and in America it has found an exponent in Mr Elmer Rice, whose *The Adding Machine* (1923) reveals the same essential features as appear in Kaiser's play.

Still more recently, because of the special conditions operative in the life there, Russia has aimed at producing a kind of drama where the machine is not opposed, as it is by the expressionists, but is extolled, is praised as some-

thing which has a glory and a worth in itself, something without which the man of the future might not be. This movement, however, together with the Continental "Neue Sachlichkeit," may be neglected here as not affecting the development of the English stage.

Realism, then, has been attacked in Germany by impressionist and expressionist; the former may incline at times toward the older romanticism, but both are forward-looking movements, not retrospective. Other countries have, of course, added their endeavours to aid on the one style or the other. In Russia Leonid Andreiev had already anticipated much of the new aims when he wrote *The Life of Man* in 1906 and *King Hunger* in 1907; slightly later M. Nicholai Evreinov's *The Theatre of the Soul* (1915), although not wholly satisfying as a work of art, indicated further extensions of the drama away from naturalistic forms. Italy gave us Signor Luigi Pirandello, who, in *Six Characters in Search of an Author* (1921), found expression in dramatic form for an idea equivalent to the scientific conceptions of relativity. In Czecho-Slovakia M. Karel Capek essayed new fields in *R.U.R.* (translated by Mr Paul Selver, 1923) and *The Insect Play* (adapted by Mr Clifford Bax in collaboration with Sir Nigel Playfair, 1923). In France the new movements have consolidated themselves in the *théâtres d'avant-garde* under MM. Gaston Baty, Charles Dullin, Louis Jouvet, and Georges Pitoeff, with the support of such venturers as the Compagnie des Quinze under M. M. Saint-Denis. These theatres have a regular group of authors whose whole endeavour *se résume dans cette recherche des nouveaux moyens d'expression* which the Germans too are seeking; they desire to "retheatralize the theatre." From M. Denys Amiel to M. Jean-Jacques Bernard, from M. Paul Claudel to M. Henri-René Lenormand, they are pitting their strength against the earlier standards of realism.

If these various forces of progress be analysed in search of fundamental characteristics it will be found that the dramatists aim at two things in particular—a more profound view of life than was introduced by the majority of the

realists and a different medium of expression. All have recognized that the naturalistic conversation cultivated from 1890 to 1920 is insufficient, that the terms of life can never be the terms of art. Comedy may use a select choice of ordinary conversational periods, but serious drama, particularly that serious drama which aspires toward the emotion of tragedy, demands a form of dialogue which shall be raised above the levels of the familiar and the commonplace. If great themes are to be dealt with in drama a medium for great dialogue too must be found. So far, it seems, the final satisfaction of this need has not been achieved; but a consideration of the ways of approach toward a solving of the problem may best be deferred to the section which deals with the English dramatists.

CHAPTER II

GENERAL CONDITIONS

THE English dramatists, on the whole, have been less enterprising than their Continental fellows. Since 1920 we have witnessed many changes in the theatre, but our stagecraft, in spite of the example given by Mr Gordon Craig, has remained lagging behind the experimentation in scenic forms abroad, and our dramatic work has exhibited no such tendencies toward revolutionary innovations as are apparent in Germany and America. This may not, of course, be entirely harmful—of that time alone can judge; but we cannot overlook the fact that we lack almost entirely a self-conscious *avant-garde* policy in our theatres and that a certain atmosphere of satisfied acceptance of existing conditions contrasts markedly with the enthusiastic and sometimes artistically acrimonious controversies over rival styles which animate the German, the American, and the French theatres alike.

Looking round on the English playhouses of to-day, we are bound to recognize the operation of forces both good and bad. Within recent years the cinema and the wireless have come to take their hold upon the populace at large, and both, it may be thought, are working against the success of the theatre. The wireless must induce many who might otherwise have gone to seek entertainment in a play to content themselves with a cheaper kind of entertainment at home. The cinema, because of its accessibility, its more frequent change of programme, and its relative cheapness, undoubtedly draws many within its doors. In some respects we seem almost to be back in the forties of the last century, with a distinct cleavage between the legitimate and the illegitimate, between major and minor. The analogy is the nearer in that the cinema frankly makes use of all those elements of popular appeal which had served

the melodrama in the past. Spectacularism is used there freely; appeal is made to that desire of throwing off the meanly sordid and monotonous surroundings of actual life in order to enter, if but for an hour, into a world of romance; as in the melodrama, the film exploits the world of crime and sensation.

Recognizing the power which all these things have on the popular mind, certain theatres have attempted to meet the cinema on its own terms, just as Drury Lane in 1830 exploited the spectacular effects on which the Surrey and Sadler's Wells based their success. During the last five years we have seen the production of great spectacular pieces such as *The White Horse Inn*, *Waltzes from Vienna*, *The Miracle*, and *Cavalcade*, all deliberately designed with this end in view. We have had, too, a run of 'thrillers' and 'crook-plays' planned to rival the popular 'gangster' films. We have had pieces, like *Street Scene*, based on the technique of the screen. In some ways these efforts are justified. It is an undoubted fact that recent developments have revealed to us three distinctly new methods of technique—the technique of the silent film, the technique of the 'talkie,' and the technique of the wireless play. In the first the appeal is visual only, in the last it is purely aural; the second comes closer to the double appeal of the stage. Inevitably and rightly these new forms of art have modified and enlarged the dramatic consciousness. Even before 1920 an appeal was made by Signor Marinetti, the Italian 'futurist,' for a new theatrical technique based on an appreciation of what the new spirit in the cinema implied. In the cinema he saw a freshly developed art-form capable of awakening a new spirit in the theatre. He would have none of your acts or long scenes, but would split up each play into a number of short episodes, each terse and symbolically significant—just such a series of succinct and effective pictures as we find in the film. It is not difficult to trace the influence of this conception in many expressionistic plays of to-day. The device is used in Herr Toller's *Masse-Mensch*, in Herr Kaiser's *Gas*, in Mr Munro's *The Rumour*; in a milder form it is to be seen even in historical

plays like Herr Werfel's *Juarez und Maximilian* or the *Napoleon* (1932) adapted by Mr Drinkwater from the Italian of Signori Giovacchino Forzano and Benito Mussolini. Similarly the wireless technique has come to influence some modern writers, although here perhaps it is more difficult to trace direct and critically appreciable influence. Out of experimentation in the form of the sightless play grew Mr Berkeley's magnificent *The White Château* and the poignant *The Quest of Elizabeth*, as well as Mr Dukes' *The Dumb Wife of Cheapside*.

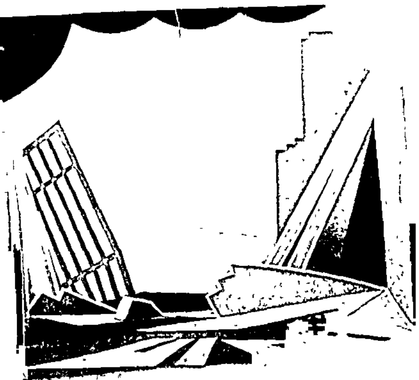
While we may recognize in the influence of these entirely new forms a vitalizing spirit, and while we may welcome all the endeavours on the part of the dramatists to make use of such suggestions as are freely offered to them here—while, too, we may recognize that the true way of progress lies, not in merely condemning film or wireless and proceeding as though they were not—we must feel that the attempt made merely to rival the appeal of the cinema by means of spectacular shows is definitely a false step. If it comes to spectacle the film can achieve effects far more splendid than can be realized in the theatre. The worth of *The White Horse Inn* and of *Cavalcade* may perhaps be justified by the resultant success of these pieces, but from these can spring no fundamental advance in the world of the theatre. They are imitative merely of externals in the film; Herr Toller's *Masse-Mensch* and Mr Munro's *The Rumour* are adapting basic technique and applying that to another form of artistry.

The success of the cinema, especially after the introduction and improvement of methods of sound-reproduction, has been mightily deplored in our own times. The advance of the cinema has, we are told, effectively killed the theatre as a popular form of artistic entertainment. Considerable justification for this point of view exists. Apart from the fact that some managements are deliberately endeavouring to reproduce the external elements of film appeal in their playhouses, we have seen many theatres turned, temporarily or permanently, into cinemas, and we have heard countless complaints from the theatres of smaller audiences and lack

of general support. All this is unquestionably true, yet if one is not entirely pessimistic one may see other aspects of the existing conditions which give hope for the future. When we speak of diminishing audiences we must remember that the last ten years have been almost unparalleled in theatre-building activities. The years 1921 to 1932 have witnessed the erection of such playhouses as the Fortune, the Q, the Carlton, the Dominion, the Duchess, the Cambridge, the Saville, the Westminster, and the Whitehall.[1] Although London has increased in population, it cannot be assumed that these new theatres have not had their effect on the takings at other playhouses. The cinemas are not responsible for all the so-called loss of support. Indeed, it may well be that the cinemas are educating in their own way a body of spectators who otherwise would never or rarely have gone to the theatres at all. In the end the ill wind may blow the playhouses good.

In this connexion it is worthy of remark that since the popularization of the cinema has grown up that vast and increasing amateur movement encouraged and supervised by the British Drama League and the Scottish Community Drama Association. Primarily the activities of these bodies are directed toward the production of plays by amateurs only, but indirectly the work of both organizations must have a deep influence upon the professional theatres. The potential audience is being increased; people who never thought of plays are being induced to act; and from amateur acting the attendance at theatres to see others act must undoubtedly come. Moreover, this potential audience is being, so to speak, educated. We do not want an audience of priggish, highbrow spectators in our playhouses, but we do want men and women capable of appreciating the requirements of the stage, the technical difficulties involved, and the aims of producer and actor; the basis for this appreciation is surely being prepared by the active support of the two organizations and through the medium of their journals, *Drama* and *The Scottish Stage*.

[1] It is true, of course, that some of these have already turned from stage plays to films.



Design by Paul Shelving for Kaiser's "Gas"

CHAPTER III

THE RELICS OF REALISM AND SIGNS OF CHANGE

THAT the realistic movement was not completely dissipated about the year 1920 is shown by the work of a number of modern playwrights, yet the main force of realism was then undoubtedly spent. A number of those writers who built up the stage between 1890 and 1920 still continue to produce works in the naturalistic style, and some younger authors of unquestioned promise have followed in the path blazed out by them; nevertheless, their efforts are seen to be retrospective always. The passing of an old style and the coming of a new is, indeed, nowhere better indicated than in the deliberate alteration of tone in the later work of some of the greater and more creative authors who have carried on their activities from the first decades of the century up to the present. Among these Mr Shaw is, of course, by far the most important.

(i) George Bernard Shaw

In many respects it is not correct to discuss Mr Shaw's later plays separately here, for, from his earliest experiments, he had introduced an element of fantasy and supernaturalistic humour which differentiated his work from that of most of his companions. In spite of Androcles' delightful lion, however, and in spite of the charming unrealities of life in imaginative Bulgaria, this note of fantasy does not reach full proportions till we come to Mr Shaw's later dramas. The dividing-line is well marked by *Heartbreak House*, described as "A Fantasia in the Russian Manner on English Themes," in 1919. This was followed by *Back to Methuselah* (1921), *Saint Joan* (1923), *The Apple Cart* (1929)—"a Political Extravaganza"—and in 1932 the still more bizarre and eccentric *Too True to be Good*. The

gradual development in all of these from modified naturalism to frank imaginative treatment is manifest. No surer indication could be found of the main desires of the age, for Mr Shaw, through his keen power of observation and his sensitive appreciation of public moods, is a kind of dramatic barometer of the times. He has shown, more obviously than any other dramatist, the altered condition of the public mind since 1920. Nor is it only in form that his later work departs from his earlier. The change in form is merely an outward semblance of an inner change. The older realistic drama had, for the most part, been occupied with man as a social animal. Mr Galsworthy's plays, Mr Granville-Barker's plays, the plays of Hankin and the 'repertory' school, had rarely gone beyond a consideration of the human personality in contact with other human personalities or with those more abstract social forces which, almost unwittingly, they had called into being. Something more than this is demanded by the new age, something of that quality of 'religion' for which H. A. Jones pleaded as far back as the nineties. Man *sub specie æternitatis* or man in his deeper inward self is called for by these new spectators. Already Mr Shaw had made several steps in this direction, but it was only in the later plays that he developed that added strength and depth of purpose which the new mood demands. *Heartbreak House*, at any rate up to its inharmonious conclusion, was by far the greatest drama he had yet written; *Back to Methuselah*, whatever one may think of its philosophy, trembles with an imaginative passion of which Mr Shaw had hitherto shown himself ignorant; *Saint Joan*, besides being a brilliant exposition of theories concerning a past age, hovers on the verge of mystical emotion; *The Apple Cart* and *Too True to be Good*, although lighter and more fantastic in form, deal with fundamental problems in the inner life of man. A new note of poetry has entered in, colouring and deepening such tendencies in that direction as Mr Shaw had shown in *Androcles and the Lion*. In these plays Mr Shaw has indicated that the modern drama which shall be expressive of the modern spirit must be a 'religious,' in the sense of a philosophic, drama. Maybe

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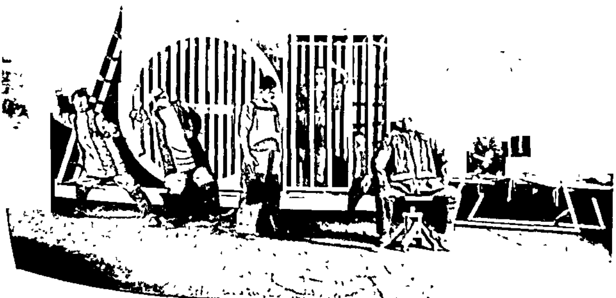
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he himself is only carrying to fulfilment tendencies already marked in his early work, but then, as has already been pointed out, that early work, although popular and exerting a widespread influence, was not wholly characteristic of the ordinary theatre of its time. Mr Shaw, even in the nineties, had looked ahead and felt dissatisfaction with the form of naturalism which alone served in that epoch to establish standards newer and more vital than the standards of an outworn romanticism.

(ii) The Continuance of Realism

Some elements of a similar kind, although perhaps not so deeply marked, are evident in the work of other dramatists of the 1900–20 school. Mr Galsworthy permits a slightly new note of 'philosophy' to enter into his *Loyalties* (1922) and *The Forest* (1924). Mr St John Ervine leaves the present day to write a costume drama in *The Lady of Belmont* (1925). Sir Arthur Pinero—unsatisfactorily, it is true—turns to a 'poetic' framework for *The Enchanted Cottage* (1922). Mr Granville-Barker tries a new style in *The Secret Life* (1923), a play marred by a certain incoherency and by a strange mixture of would-be naturalistic and enigmatically symbolic language; in *His Majesty* (1928) he gives reign to his fancy, and, while keeping the realistic form, allows his mind to dwell a space in an imaginary Carpathia with figures representative of fundamental moods—the fiery Count Czernyak, the revolutionary Bruckner, the time-serving Dr Madrassy, the politely and urbanely sardonic King Henry XIII. With this last-mentioned play might be named the kindred "fantastic comedy" by Miss Cicely Hamilton, *The Old Adam* (1924; printed 1926), in which too the action takes place in a Balkan Paphlagonia and current tendencies are symbolically discussed within a framework which has the outward semblance of realism.

These writers, however, who have, in one way or another, altered their style with the passing from the old to the new find some companions in the modern period who deliberately look back to the realistic style and who, in almost unchanged



SCENE IN MEYERHOLD'S THEATRE, MOSCOW

technique, carry on the traditions of 1890–1920. It cannot be denied that some fine work has been done in this form during the last ten years, but, with our eyes upon major movements in the world of the drama, we cannot avoid noting that the particular mould chosen by these playwrights is one which, it would seem, has largely spent its force. No denial of the worth of their works is here intended; Otway's *Venice Preserv'd* is a great play, yet similarly the historian of the drama is forced to observe that it goes back for its inspiration to a dramatic form which in its time had long been abandoned. Among these dramatists one of the most important is Miss Clemence Dane. Her *A Bill of Divorcement* (1921) is a masterly study in the theme of heredity, showing a skilful technique and a dialogue distinguished, yet easy and natural. The story of Margaret, forced into sacrificing herself for her husband, returned from an asylum as from the dead, and of her daughter Sydney, equally forced to abandon her marriage, is told with a directness that places this play among the finest that the realistic school had to give to us. A trifle less strong, but nevertheless effective, is *Mariners* (written 1925–26; U.S.A. 1927), with its subtle study of the mild little rector, Benjamin Cobb, married to the vulgar Lily. Unfortunately, here, as in a number of realistic plays of the modern period, a certain note of sentimentality has crept in. This element of sentimentality is due to the fact that where, in accordance with modern desires, the realistic drama strives to depict more than the mere outward surroundings and obvious emotions, it tends to overstep its bounds. In such a play as *Chains* the playwright does little more than depict; but in *Mariners* Miss Dane shows a desire for something beyond mere depiction. An element of purpose informs her work, but that very purpose has the effect of introducing a note of disharmony. One may find a similar failing in two Cockney plays—Mr Charles McEvoy's *The Likes of Her* (1923) and Mr Ernest George's *Down our Street* (1929). The former is saved from over-sentimentalization because of the exceedingly vivid picture it presents of East End life; yet the scene where Sally,

magnanimous beyond her station, permits the wretched Florrie to break her china, and the other scene where Florrie, contrite, speeds off to tell the returned George Miles the truth, are on the verge of the pathetically propagandist. Another kind of Sally is given a prominent place in the Belle of *Down our Street.* She too is granted a vision above her surroundings, although the dramatist has not been consistent in his portrait. Here the sentimentalization becomes more obvious because there is less technical brilliance than in Mr McEvoy's play. To abandon Tessie, in whom interest is first centred, seems to have been a capital error.

Of recent years the greatest success in this style has been attained by Mr John Van Druten. Mr Van Druten's technical skill is unquestioned; his ability to present arresting situations and to deal with them brilliantly in the realistic style has gained for him both critical esteem and popularity. Yet his plays are backward- and not forward-looking. *Young Woodley* (1928) is magnificently done, with its neat, clear-cut characterization and its crisp situations; attention never wanders here, and the dialogue never strays from the naturalistic convention. Yet *Young Woodley*, brilliant essay though that play be, seems to belong to the older type: it is reproducing an earlier style rather than experimenting in fresh forms. The same criticism may be passed on all Mr Van Druten's work. In *Diversion* (1928) there is a kindred clarity in structure and in characterization, and the play almost reaches to a genuine tragic note. The last scene, with its atmosphere of passion and despair concealed during the entry of Muriel and Owen, is magnificently conceived. *After All* (1929) is less exact and simple in planning—perhaps it was a mistake to refuse to allow such an important character as Greta to enter the stage save in one short scene—but here, as in the comedy *London Wall* (1931), the dialogue retains the qualities of naturalistic ease. In all of these we recognize Mr Van Druten's unquestioned skill and strength and at the same time are conscious of something lacking. Even *The Return of the Soldier* (1928), based on Miss Rebecca West's novel,

wants that quality hard to analyse and intangible which we demand from the higher drama to-day. Good though it may be in its naturalistic style, there is both an absence of deeper power and a tendency, in this story of a man whose memory moves back fifteen years toward an early love, to sentimentality.

Similar features appear in the once-lauded *Journey's End* (1928) of Mr R. C. Sherriff. At one time almost every critic was acclaiming this play as the masterpiece of the century, and Mr Sherriff as the greatest genius of his age. That he had caught the secret of the naturalistic style is true, that through that naturalistic style he made a direct though temporary appeal is certain; but, viewed in relation to other plays of a similar kind, his work must be recognized to be wanting in strength. Within the naturalistic field it comes nowhere near Miss Dane's *A Bill of Divorcement*, where character and purpose are both profoundly visualized; and, without mentioning Mr O'Casey's *The Silver Tassie*, wherein a different technique is employed, it, as a drama, seems to fall below Mr Allan Monkhouse's *The Conquering Hero* (1924; published 1923), in which a kind of concentrated passion gives nobility and dignity to the treatment. Mr Monkhouse's characters are deeply and vividly incised; his fine figure of Francis Iredale is no less distinct than his artistic Chris, his single-minded Margaret than his more complex Helen. Perhaps, however, in another play, *First Blood* (1924), Mr Monkhouse shows the pitfalls that lie in the way of the dramatist who wishes to pursue the old path. *First Blood* is a study of industrial strife with the revolutionary 'men,' represented by Jack Livsey and Tom Eden, pitted against the 'masters,' represented in Sir Samuel Stott. Interesting though this study is, it lacks the freshness that informed the earlier examples of this school, and it descends close to sentimentalism. When Mr Galsworthy wrote *Strife* and when Mr Ervine wrote *Mixed Marriage* these dramatists were doing new things; they were genuinely creating. When Mr Monkhouse turns to *First Blood* he seems to be unconsciously imitating. The atmosphere of *Strife* dominates the play, and the conclusion

reminds us of Mr Ervine's conclusion. When Nora fell by a stray bullet Mr Ervine was greatly imagining a situation of his own devising; in Mr Monkhouse's hands the similar death of Phyllis, followed by the death of Lionel, seems to become merely sentimental because lacking in vividity and strength.

This sentimentalism colours many plays of the kind produced during recent years. Another example might be given in Mr H. B. Trevelyan's *The Dark Angel* (1928), which shows, in a prologue, Kitty, romantically in love, spending the night with Hilary Trent and pledging him eternal devotion. The play then passes over some years. Kitty believes Trent killed in the War; she clings to his memory, but finds herself drifting into a love for Gerald Shannon. Suddenly the discovery is made that Trent is alive, permanently blinded; magnanimously he releases her from her oath. This play has distinction, but the characters are shadowy, and there is that mixture of moods which tends toward the sentimental. The attempt to introduce something of the element of wonder, through the means of the gipsy woman Roma, fails of its purpose.

Mr J. R. Ackerley's fine study in the naturalistic style, *The Prisoners of War* (1925), gains strength from the prevailing atmosphere, which is cleverly suggested, and from the careful studies of character introduced. There is little external action here, and the avoidance of this enables the author to put greater stress on the inner conflict in the natures of his *dramatis personæ*. The sense of nervous tension, of strange moods born of a strange environment, is excellently conveyed by means of a dialogue which, although it never lapses from the naturalistic, yet gives an impression of dignity and grace. The concentrated effect of *The Prisoners of War* might well be contrasted with the atmosphere of Mr C. B. Fernald's *To-morrow* (1928), where the attempt to depict human emotion in the event of another war is vitiated by the complexity of the plot and the diversity of style in the dialogue.

Among those writers who have pursued this path none has won greater fame than Mr A. A. Milne. Mr Milne is

one of the few followers of Sir James Barrie in our generation, but he wears the familiar Barrie-esque garments with a difference. At a first glance his style is amazingly like that of his master. The stage-directions are cast in the same non-dramatic and whimsical mood. In the second act of *Michael and Mary* (1930; U.S.A. 1929) the father clergyman thus "*goes down the stairs . . . to the station . . . to the lonely Bedfordshire vicarage . . . saying over in his mind all that Michael said to him, all the loving things which he meant to have said to Michael.*" Mr Milne's play world, like that of Sir James Barrie, orients its affections and its attentions toward the baby, chubby and sweetly cooing. In *Michael and Mary* Mary says, "'Children, Michael? Oh, I would love to have your son. Can't I just think about him for a little?' (*She thinks about him.*)" And in *The Great Broxopp* (1923), when Broxopp has spoken of his great scheme for a new baby food he and his wife "*gaze eagerly into the future, Broxopp seeing his million babies, Nancy seeing her one,*" until the curtain mercifully descends. This Barrie-like sentimentalism is not, however, copied exactly. Sir James Barrie makes free use of the supernatural; Mr Milne keeps his atmosphere strictly human. A good example of this is given in *The Dover Road* (1922). Mr Latimer there is Mr Milne's Lob, but instead of being a recreated Pan or Puck he is only a kind-hearted millionaire bent on showing runaway couples that the path to Paris is paved with perils. The technique here is excellent, but the atmosphere can be described only as sentimental. Sentimentalism, generally associated with wise but quiet ladies who are gifted with a rich sense of humour, is freely exploited in Mr Milne's theatre. In *The Great Broxopp* the lady is Nancy; in *Michael and Mary* it is Mary. The latter play was published with a preface in which Mr Milne wittily endeavours to defend himself from the sentimental charge, but this barely carries conviction. *Michael and Mary* is a charming study in idealism, but there is failure in an insufficient motivating of the bigamous marriage, and frequently the idealism loses strength and quality. A similar woman-type appears in

the Ariadne Winter of *Ariadne, or Business First* (1925); she successfully cures her John of his odious pettiness. Her sister is Jennifer in *To Have the Honour* (1924), a play which presents to us plain but charming Michael Brown masquerading as Prince Michael Robolski of Neo-Slavonia and Jennifer, his wife, disporting herself as a general's widow. In *Mr Pim Passes By* (1921) Olivia betrays similar features. This is one of Mr Milne's cleverest plays; Mr Pim himself and the part he enacts are real creations. Set within more fantastic surroundings, the same lady is adumbrated in Princess Ameril, the affianced bride of King Hilary XXIV in *Portrait of a Gentleman in Slippers* (1926). Quite different from the tone of these plays is *Success* (1923), where, in spite of the intrusion once more of a sentimental colouring, Mr Milne, by his almost despairing acceptance of life's crushing littlenesses, strikes a new tone. The story of Selby Mannock and his earlier love, Lady Carchester, is told with skill, and the sense of success 'closing in' is suggestively conveyed. The dream scene here might be particularly noted as an example of Mr Milne's fine theatrical craftsmanship. One must regret that, with this unquestioned talent and keen appreciation of stage effect, Mr Milne has not pursued more fully the path indicated here.

Some other dramatists, such as Mr Benn W. Levy, manifestly aim at bringing to the naturalistic form something of a deeper and more philosophic purpose. In *The Devil* (1930) Mr Levy chooses a theme of a religious nature, and in *Mrs Moonlight* (1928; published 1929) introduces an atmosphere which extends beyond the immediately tangible and the rational. Mr Levy's work is undoubtedly noteworthy—particularly for its masterly dialogue and its gallery of effective portraits. This realistic style has been pursued, of course, by many besides those mentioned above. Mr Mordaunt Shairp has his psychological study, *The Offence* (1925); Mr Edward Percy his striking dialect play, *If Four Walls Told* (1922); Mr Halcott Glover, veering from the epically planned Biblical drama, *Exodus* (1923), which he wrote in collaboration with Mr H. F.

Rubinstein, turns in *The Second Round* (1923) and *God's Amateur* (1928) to complex realistic themes. Such plays still gain success in the theatre; the pathetic *Cynara* (1930) of Mr H. M. Harwood and Mr R. Gore Browne and the sentimentally conceived *Autumn Crocus* (1931) of Miss C. L. Anthony both had considerable followings. A large proportion of recently printed plays too assume this style; Mr Hermon Ould's *The Light Comedian* (1928), Aimée and Philip Stuart's *The Cat's Cradle* (written 1925; 1926) and *Clara Gibbings* (1929) and Miss E. M. Delafield's *To See Ourselves* (1931) may be chosen as examples. It is obviously impossible to mention the work of all the younger writers in a work of this scope; possibly the achievement of some who are destined to win fame have here been omitted. All that may be done is to indicate the general styles and tendencies, and these seem to be suggested in the representative plays mentioned.

In spite, however, of the numerous works of this kind produced during recent years, it must be agreed that, so far as serious plays are concerned, we have passed the period of creative brilliance in this particular style. Mr William Archer did a good thing, in *The Old Drama and the New*, to call attention to the value of the realistic plays of our own time, but already at the period when that book was written (1923) the school of naturalism had in general lost its strength and that vital sense of adventurous discovery which is the prime necessity for all great art.

CHAPTER IV

THE COMEDY OF MANNERS

IF, however, the serious drama in the naturalistic style has died it may be fancied that there is a possibility for the development of a new comedy of manners. The Restoration comedy resulted from conditions when a keen observation of life was allied to an intellectual mood of disillusion and a bitingly satiric treatment of social follies. That this Restoration comedy in some ways at least makes appeal to the modern age is demonstrated by the considerable number of revivals which it has witnessed since 1920, by the publication both in *de luxe* and popular *format* of the collected works of authors in that style and by the attention which these dramatists have attracted among the critics. Congreve, Wycherley, and Etherege are understood now as they have never been understood since they first brought their plays before the courtiers of the seventeenth century.

Already in the earlier period (1890–1920), as has been seen, there had been a revival of wit and a definite approach toward purely intellectual comedy; this movement appears to be gaining in power during our own times. Wilde had re-established the form, and Jones experimented similarly in *The Liars*; Mr Bernard Shaw seized on a good deal that was vital in the comedy of manners and used it for his own purposes. Perhaps, however, none of these has so completely captured the spirit that animated the Restoration theatre as Mr Somerset Maugham has done. Mr Maugham is a dramatist whose work is hard to assess. He stands for actuality and all it implies in the theatre, yet his works seem to have a value beyond that he would give them himself. "The day before yesterday's newspaper is not more dead," he writes in the preface to the second volume of his collected *Plays* (1931), "than the play of twenty years ago.

. . . The foundation of living drama is actuality. It must be natural above all things, and it achieves the illusion of truth by reproducing as exactly as the exigencies of the theatre permit the manners and customs of the day." In most of his comedies and dramas he has striven to keep this purpose in view, but in spite of that one has the impression that at least some of his works will remain as those of other authors have remained. This attitude of his presents one difficulty to the critical historian. Another is that Mr Maugham's dramatic activity is of extraordinary diversity. In 1902 he started his career with a drama in German, *Schiffbrüchig*, and since then he has turned out plays in half a dozen different styles. Some are studies in passionate situation. *The Tenth Man* (1910) thus deals, arrestingly but at times a trifle sentimentally, with a financial 'giant' who thinks all men have their price; although Mr Maugham has made us interested in this George Winter, the play as a whole is really less vivid than Jones' early *The Rogue's Comedy* (1896), which challenges comparison for various reasons. *Smith* (1909) shows sentimentalism run riot with its contrast of the upper middle-class 'Society' set and Thomas Freeman, the healthy young Australian; the same theme, but more strongly, is continued in *The Land of Promise* (1914). As representative of this mood in the later period of his career, one might refer to *Cæsar's Wife* (1919), where a strange mixture of 'honour and duty' and delicate raillery causes disharmony, and to *The Letter* (1927), a full-blooded 'drama' of love, murder, and retribution in the Malay Peninsula. For these Mr Maugham will not be remembered. As early as 1908, however, in *Mrs Dot*, he had suggested greater possibilities. *Mrs Dot* is farcically conceived, but there is evident the following of Wilde's style. This is continued in *Penelope* (1909), with its charming picture in the manners style of Professor Golightly and its frank air of intellectualism. In *The Circle* (1921) Mr Maugham brought this mood to more adequate expression; here characters are more precisely drawn, and the dialogue has a peculiarly even poise. In spite of the fact that there is a problem underlying its wi

in this play Mr Maugham challenges the Restoration masters on their own ground, marking an advance on Wilde by the subtle use of the *mot de situation* where the dramatic setting adds to or gives point to the easy repartee. The likeness of Mr Maugham's work to that of the seventeenth century is even more clearly shown in *Our Betters* (U.S.A. 1917; London 1923), which is almost pure Wycherley. The setting is aristocratic; the people introduced live idle lives, intrigue alone occupying their thoughts. The brilliance of the social portraiture argues the dramatist's mastery of his craft. Eminently rationalistic, too, is *The Constant Wife* (1927), with its calm acceptance of existing conditions, with its Restoration emphasis on the transitory nature of love. In *The Breadwinner* (1930) there is treated the thoughtless and boring brilliance of the young. Judy's remark that "since the War the amateurs have entirely driven the professionals out of business" might be taken as Mr Maugham's last sardonic motto.

This conflict of young and old, the 'generations theme,' which provided material for many serious playwrights, has gained several fresh exponents during the last ten years. Harold Chapin's *The New Morality* (produced 1920) is delightful Congreve where Mr Maugham's plays are savage Wycherley. The story of Betty Jones, who quarrels with every one because of her appreciation of new standards, is excellently and wittily told. The young generation has its fervent propagandist in Mr Miles Malleson, whose *The Fanatics* (1924) made plea for revised conceptions of social life; it found its light-hearted exponent in Mr Noel Coward, whose plays, like Colley Cibber's, contain much that sounds like wit even if, on examination, the elements of true wit are found in them to be lacking. Mr Coward is a complete master of the theatre, and most of his works put absolute reliance on the actor and his surroundings. The *Collected Sketches and Lyrics* of 1931 makes painful reading, and the success of *Cavalcade* (1931) is a success of spectacular brilliance and immediate appeal to popular sentiment. Yet Mr Coward showed in his earlier work an amazing promise. *The Rat Trap* (1924) was an extraordinary piece

of naturalistic writing for a young man, and in *The Young Idea* (1923) he produced a comedy of genuine brilliance. Save for a weakness in the introduction of the American at the end, this play, with its irrepressible Gerda and Sholto, bubbles with airy charm, and if the bubbles of wit burst we have at least had the delight of their iridescent laughter. It seems unfortunate that Mr Coward has not pursued this path farther.

Mr Frederick Lonsdale works best in the Maugham style. *Spring Cleaning* (1925) seriously and somewhat unsatisfactorily deals with the problem of a wife's affections. Margaret Sones is being misled by a wretched crew of bright young things—Lady Jane, Archie Wells, and Bobby Williams—and is forcibly brought back to reason by her powerfully minded husband. The bitter satire of modern life reminds us of Mr Maugham's work. Mr Lonsdale's most interesting play has a kindred atmosphere. In *The Last of Mrs Cheyney* (1925) he displays an unquestioned technical brilliance and produces a really charming scene in the reading of Lord Elton's foolish letter. A sentimental conclusion mars what might have otherwise been regarded as a worthy partner to *The Circle*. In another way Mr Munro has spoilt his *At Mrs Beam's* (1921), a play which seemed to give a promise which, unfortunately, its author has not pursued farther. Here, though the 'boarding-house' episodes are magnificently done, the 'romantic' atmosphere is unsatisfactory. Lately Mr Ervine, turning from serious drama, produced a skilful and successful comedy of manners in *The First Mrs Fraser* (1928); Mr Drinkwater similarly has given us his delightfully topsy-turvy *Bird in Hand* (1928); and within recent years Mr J. B. Fagan has turned out some excellent period and modern comedies—*And So to Bed* (1926) and *The Improper Duchess* (1931)—which, although designed perhaps for immediate appeal, take their place in the range of modern comic drama. Similarly light and crisp are Mr H. M. Harwood's *The Man in Possession* (1930), Mr J. Hastings Turner's *The Lilies of the Field* (1923), with its delightful portraits of the gay Catherine and Elizabeth, and Mr J. Hartley Manners' joyous *Peg o' my Heart* (1916).

With these might be noted the charming fantasies designed by Mr A. P. Herbert for production at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith, under Sir Nigel Playfair. *La Vie Parisienne* (1929), *Tantivy Towers* (1931), and *Derby Day* (1932), while in one respect indicating the modern desire of escape from formal realism, demonstrate in another the prevalent love of wit and laughter. Nor, in this connexion, should we omit mention of the flourishing of farce during the last decade. Farce may be a less important form of artistry than comedy and must always owe much to the talents of the performers, but it seems as if many of our modern farces are better constructed and more whimsically conceived than the majority of such pieces in the past. *It Pays to Advertise* (1924), by Mr Roi Cooper Megrue and Walter Hackett, was an excellent piece of its kind, and Mr W. A. Darlington's *Alf's Button* (1924), with its delightfully fantastic recreation of Arabian Nights atmosphere, seems to be establishing itself as a permanent companion of *Charley's Aunt* and *The Private Secretary*. In spite of the serious temper of the time and its many social difficulties, we have not entirely forgotten how to laugh.

CHAPTER V

THE POETIC DRAMA

WHEN, with due critical perspective, the history of drama during the last twelve years comes to be written, it seems probable that the age will be recognized as one which boldly manifested a renascence of imagination, which exhibited a reaction to the prevailing naturalism of the first years of the twentieth century. Already attention has been drawn to the way in which some of the elder writers have altered their style in accordance with the spirit of the new age; here will have to be considered the path trodden by those of the moderns whose period of activity belongs largely to recent years.

One recognizes, of course, that (quite apart from the plays of Mr Shaw and Sir James Barrie) a certain element of poetic fantasy is to be discovered in the theatre between 1890 and 1920, but this quality is definitely subordinate to the realistic tendency. Only in Ireland did there flourish a school of dramatists in whose work the poetic imagination suffused their themes, whose aim deviated from the common purpose of reproducing as faithfully as might be the external forms of life. How the strength of that naturalistic movement disappears in our own time has been suggested in an earlier section; now we must investigate the way or ways whereby the writers of to-day have endeavoured to provide something to take its place. Quite clearly such a movement of reaction may assume many forms. A common aim may be expressed in the opposition to the purely naturalistic, but the methods of attack may be so diverse as to differentiate various schools of this kind from one another quite as much as each is differentiated from their common opponent. In general, perhaps, it might be said that in modern times three such schools (apart from that which has produced the purely spectacular musical plays

referred to in an earlier chapter) are clearly to be recognized. The first is the school of poetic drama; the second is the modernist 'Continental' school; and the third is that which for convenience may be styled the school of the historical playwrights.

GORDON BOTTOMLEY AND LASCELLES ABERCROMBIE

The first of these has at present small hold on the commercial theatres; for this there are several reasons. As we look at the development of drama from the point of view of form we can trace a gradual tendency moving from the elaborate stanzaic dialogue of medieval times, through the simpler 'fourteeners' and decasyllabic couplets of the sixteenth century, to blank verse and prose. In blank verse and prose the Elizabethans found the perfect media for the expression of their dramatic conceptions, whether comic or tragic; these two forms were carried to a height of glory by Marlowe and by Shakespeare; they were provided with additional modifications by the writers of the early seventeenth century.

It is at this point that the first serious difficulty enters in. Elizabethan prose speech was itself far more richly patterned and far more poetically figurative than is the ordinary prose of modern times; it has in it something of the rhythm of passionate utterance; its cadences have oftentimes a definite regularity of movement. Shakespearian blank verse, therefore, might almost be regarded as a kind of heightened prose utterance, just such a heightened medium as provided a raising of the dialogue medium sufficient for the enunciation of tragic passion and such as could be readily appreciated by spectators whose ears were by custom apt to catch the tones of poetic imagery and melodic utterance. After the seventeenth century, however, two things happened. The Elizabethans had done so much with blank verse, had set so high a model, that later dramatists simply imitated their styles. Blank verse, in other words—at least, so far as the theatre was concerned—ceased to be truly creative; it lost its original freshness, and

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the poets who adopted this style found themselves inevitably fettered; Shakespearian, Marlovian, and Fletcherian cadences persisted in forcing themselves into their work. This imitative blank verse endured throughout the nineteenth century; in the twentieth Stephen Phillips was still writing in the old tradition. At the same time ordinary prose utterance gradually but surely lost its richness. It became stereotyped and more colloquial; what had been imaginatively and freshly figurative in the sixteenth century was reduced to fossilized terms. There thus came an abrupt chasm between the common colloquial speech and the now antiquated, because imitative, blank verse. To this must be added the fact that from 1860 onward spectators and actors were being trained in the appreciation of new naturalistic forms, with the result that the stage was left without a sufficient number of actors capable adequately of interpreting poetic dialogue and that modern audiences came to have both a distrust of and a distaste for the purely poetic drama.

To escape from this dilemma there seem to be two, and only two, lines of development open to writers of verse plays; these two lines of development have been, in our own time, fully demonstrated by Professor Lascelles Abercrombie and by Dr Gordon Bottomley respectively. Perhaps, indeed, one might say that the creative spirit in the modern drama is nowhere more clearly indicated than by the fact that, after centuries of imitative utterance, our own days should have witnessed these deliberate and creative movements toward the establishing of fresh standards.

The first way lies in the conscious search so to adapt the earlier verse-forms as to make them once more a vital means of dramatic expression. As Mr Jack Lindsay sees it,

> A purification is the first essential; but that having been achieved we must face the very difficult problem of harmonizing the newly discovered emotional directness with on the one side the mass of modern colloquialisms and on the other side the gorgeous extension of colour-imagery begun by Beddoes and carried through the gaudy rhetoric of Francis Thompson into the explosive nervosities of Edith Sitwell.

The importance of Professor Abercrombie's work in this direction, particularly in his verse drama *Deborah* (1913), has been noted by Mr Lindsay. *Deborah*, however, does not stand alone; Professor Abercrombie has continued his search after form, too, in his later works—*The Adder* (1913), *The End of the World* (1914), *The Staircase* (1920), *The Deserter* (1922), and *Phœnix* (1923). Fundamentally, Professor Abercrombie endeavours to bring his poetry into close contact with reality. He is not another singer from fairyland, as is Mr Yeats; he deliberately departs from the Elizabethan tradition which kept so many writers of the past in its thraldom. Consciously he seeks to find a form of blank verse expression which shall adequately convey to modern spectators or readers the immediate emotions of our time in terms of poetry. The powerful resonance of his verse, with its peculiar welding of highly imaginative language and of common expressions, presents a notable contribution to dramatic form. An example might be chosen from *Deborah*, where the terrible plague is thus described:

> But I within me
> Can see the thing, a ghost as grey as rain,
> Fleeces of shadowy air wrapping his shape,
> Tall as the winds, standing up over us,
> Smiling and idly bandying with his feet
> This way and that the writhing bodies like
> A man turns rats that have taken the bane he laid.

Here is one quite definite path of escape from the clinging Elizabethan melodies. Unfortunately, two things seem to have prevented Professor Abercrombie from exerting a greater influence on the theatre of our times. He is certainly no companion of those nineteenth-century dramatists who despised and neglected the playhouse: he is a poet who appreciates and who knows the stage; at the same time he is clearly more attracted by the philosophic concept than by the interests of the dramatic theme as such. It is obvious, from the dialogue he gives to such persons as the Mother, the Son, and the Tramp in *Blind* or to the Parson in *Escape*, that he is most intent on the

expression of an idea. On this is dependent the fact that, after making so notable an experiment in *Deborah*, Professor Abercrombie has not pursued much farther the way he himself had indicated; *Phœnix* takes as its setting, not a world akin to ours, but a distant and unfamilar Greece "in the times before the Trojan War," and the magnificently planned *The Sale of St Thomas* (1931), although divided into six acts and although for the most part cast in dialogue, includes a certain amount of pure narrative which unfits it for stage presentation. Here too, however, Professor Abercrombie continues his search after an adequate form.

It shall be given as you give yourself.
Of which let music be the parable.
Beautiful is the sound of strings and pipes;
More beautiful the melody in the mind
Made of the sound; most beautiful of all,
Voices of viols and harps, trumpets and flutes,
Dulcimers, horns, consenting one with another,
And melodies in these voices each on each
Conferring grace, each its own loveliness
Elaborating in concord with the rest,
All to achieve one perfect amplitude
Of manifold music, a single dignity
Of shapely intellectual delight.

This speech of Thomas's agrees fundamentally with the experimentation in blank-verse rhythm which characterizes *Deborah*.

Paradoxically, then, some of those qualities which make Professor Abercrombie's poetry so distinguished in achievement take from the value of his plays, when these are considered from the point of view of the theatre. His calm-eyed and fatalistic attitude to life gives a dignity and strength to his themes, makes them outstanding works in the history of poetic utterance, but there is not enough of character and movement to make them successful on the stage. Professor Abercrombie, however, possesses the requisite requirements, and it may be hoped that the path he made for himself in *Deborah* may yet be widened by him into a highroad which others may tread.

This marks one way of approach; the other finc expression in the plays, particularly the later plays, o Dr Gordon Bottomley. Where Professor Abercrombie has aimed at a translation of ordinary speech into poetic terms Dr Bottomley, seeing the disappearance of the closely associated Elizabethan creative prose and verse, has decided that a completely new start must be made. For this purpose he looks rather to the classical drama of Greece and to the Nō stage of Japan than to the Elizabethan theatre for his inspiration, although it is to be observed that for his two best-known plays, *King Lear's Wife* (1915) and *Gruach* (printed 1921, acted 1923), he has turned partly at least to Shakespeare. While Dr Bottomley's work is not easily divided into periods, a consistency of purpose informing all his writings, it may, indeed, be wise to consider first the early dramas, including besides the two mentioned above *The Crier by Night* (1902), *Midsummer Eve* (1905), *Laodice and Danaë*, and *The Riding to Lithend* (1909), and then the more recent lyric choral plays.

As we survey the first group Dr Bottomley's inventiveness immediately captures our attention; this is truly one of his chief qualities, and to it he adds a supremely effective ower of suggestion. Shadowy forms move out before us rom the darkness of night and fade again into the mystery f which they were born. It is not, however, only the ysterious with which Dr Bottomley has dealt; his human aracters are firmly conceived. Treatment of character, deed, is that which provides the basic strength of his two portant 'Shakespearian' dramas. The road he chooses e is daring; both plays aim at getting behind Shakeare's tragedies and at providing a basis from which those edies might logically develop.

King Lear's Wife an effort is made to account for the acters of Lear, Goneril, and Cordelia. Lear is shown s as a rather wilful, amorous old monarch. He has n wearied of his aged queen, Hygd, and taken into his the common and vulgar Gormflaith. The Queen, strung and sensitive, suffers under his injustice and but Goneril, who is a virtuous and somewhat chill

Diana, catches something of high purpose in her desire for vengeance. In bitterness she slays Gormflaith, who is discovered to be nothing but a mean prostitute. It is bitterness that dominates the play, bitterness in Lear and in Goneril, bitterness in the miserable death of Queen Hygd. Cordelia moves through it all, a child over-beloved by Lear and hated by Hygd. There is excellent character-drawing here, and the theme is fresh and original. The same qualities of freshness and strength are to be seen in *Gruach*, which purports to delineate the early life of Lady Macbeth. The young girl, reared in the barrenness of a Scottish fortress, pines for the joy of life. She is about to be married to a man whom she despises, when there arrives at the castle a youthful courtier and soldier, none other than Macbeth. In him she finds what she has been seeking, and the two take flight together. Here Dr Bottomley has taken the Lady Macbeth we know and shown her as she might have been in earlier life—not a cruel, embittered girl, but one full of life, ambitious and striving after she knows not what. It is easy to see that with age these qualities may become exaggerated and warped, developing into the terrible figure of the murderous hostess of Shakespeare's play.

One other drama in this style—although not on a Shakespearian theme—appeared in *Britain's Daughter* (1921). This is a powerful play of primitive passions, displaying to us Nest, the British princess attended only by the faithful nurse Widan, in the hands of the Romans. There are excellent scenes here, such as the picture of Ennid and the child she is forced to leave with the aged Cadvan. Cadvan's last words have a peculiar significance:

> There is no conqueror except the earth:
> The Roman lords will stay too long in Britain,
> Whose water and inbreathed air and soil-borne fruit
> Shall in the darkness of their inwards change
> Their secret seed into such British sparks
> As those that spread a running fire in ling:
> Not Rome but Britain shall be strong by them.
> It will be so: but what is that to me?
> To-night my sinking helpless country lies
> In the cold ruins of its shrunken past,

As in the trembling arms and shrivelled breast
Of an old failing man a little child
Lies ignorantly and blindly feels for dugs
That do not nourish it.
The little child, restless within my breast,
I cannot nourish yet or much protect;
I am a houseless wifeless aged man;
When men must save themselves I can do little;
I can but sit, although the child may die,
And wait for pity and help, and if it weeps
Whimper with it amid this night of woe
For Britain that is like a friendless child.

The stark barrenness here is symbolic of Dr Bottomley's skill in dealing with primitive nature. His early Britons are not merely types of to-day speaking in verse; they are given an individuality of their own—a greater brutality, a sterner indomitability of purpose, and at the same time a greater simplicity. By granting them these Dr Bottomley has succeeded in doing what few have done—creating the atmosphere of an earlier time and another race.

A definitely lyrical tendency is visible in all these dramas, and it is this lyrical quality, more fully expressed, which gives significance to Dr Bottomley's recent series of choral plays. It might be said of these that while Professor Abercrombie has striven to adapt verse to modern colloquial speech, Dr Bottomley aims at removing verse dialogue a stage farther by departing entirely from realistic conventions. His purpose may be adequately interpreted from some privately written explanations of his own. After writing *Gruach*, he declares, he "began to notice that the time is over for fitting a stylizated speech (verse) to a naturalistic action that would fit a prose play equally well." "In the meantime," he continues,

I discovered that I love listening to poetry more than reading it. Then that the movement and colour of clothes and the incidence of light could, through my eyes, put my mind into a more efficient condition for listening to it. . . . As I see the theatre, every subject can be treated at two levels: (1) on the level of every day intercourse and colloquial speech, and (2) by making humanity vocal where it is unvocal, by making the stage a place where speech has become complete (regardless of external fact) and

makes audible the grace of the soul, its grace of movement as well as of utterance.

Now, in the modern theatre, Dr Bottomley found that audiences trained or willing to accept these forms were few, and that the actors, being used to naturalistic methods, failed to give expression to the poetic language. It is in the work of the amateurs that he sees a new hope for this dramatic form; there he has a body of interpreters who may be led to express adequately the tones of poetic diction.

Insensibly I concentrated on something in which speech has as large a share as possible: then on narrative poetry, for which the Greeks found a valid place in drama: then on variety of verse-structure, which led me to see there is a place for lyric verse too.

"Look at any of the Greek masterpieces," he writes,

from the *Agamemnon* to the *Hippolytus* and you will see all those men knew that a narrative element is a necessary factor in poetry's existing upon the stage. Our Jacobeans neglected or undervalued it, with fatal results: but Shakespeare knew that it was better to tell of Ophelia drowning herself than to show her doing it. (The Japanese of his time, though, knew still more: they knew they could successfully show her in symbol drowning herself, when they could not realistically). . . . These considerations led me to attempt a new synthesis. It has two attractions for me: (*a*) it predicates an unrealistic treatment of the chosen theme—which seems to be reasonable, as verse is not a realistic form of speech and is not very comfortable in a realistic action—and, when realism is once abandoned, a delightful freedom in the choice of subject dawns for one: and (*b*) it frees performance from much of the modern theatre's expensive equipment.

Thus have grown the later choral dramas which, although they are not intended for the ordinary commercial theatre, may, when taken into consideration with what has been said above concerning the significance of the British Drama League and the Scottish Community Drama Association, indicate a line of development for the poetic play which has hitherto remained unexplored. In any case, Dr Bottomley's recent works, of which perhaps *Culbin Sands*, *Towie Castle*, and *Ardvorlich's Wife* are most memorable, quite apart from their own lyrical beauties, are being instrumental in

indicating to modern audiences the possibilities of a non-realistic approach and in training both speakers and auditors to appreciate the value of melodic utterance. At present they remain outside the walls of the regular playhouses (only in the Cambridge Festival Theatre under Mr Terence Gray was there to be discovered a conscious endeavour to exploit such dramatic forms), but their influence, indirectly at least, may be not the less profound.

So far, however, Dr Bottomley and Professor Lascelles Abercrombie, together with Mr Masefield and Mr Yeats, whose work has already been dealt with, stand alone. Apart from their works little of fundamental importance has been produced in this kind during recent years. There are, of course, interesting 'dramatic poems,' such as Mr S. R. Lysaght's finely conceived *The Immortal Jew* (1931) or Mr Edward Shanks' 'poem' *The Queen of China* (1919), but such works as this obviously subordinate the purely dramatic to the poetic and the lyrical and so cannot be considered here.

CHAPTER VI

THE 'EXPRESSIONISTIC' SCHOOL

FOR the ordinary audience of to-day verse as a dramatic medium seems to be unsuited. It may be that theatrical development during the next decades will give the lie to this judgment, but, so far as we may estimate from present conditions, prose is in general more aptly fitted to convey, in the regular public theatres, such thoughts and emotions as the dramatists have to give. On the other hand, the reaction against purely realistic prose is widespread, and many attempts have been made to secure a medium based on the prose of ordinary speech, but more effective and raised to a higher plane. This the 'Expressionists' of Germany have found in what might be called a selective and concentrated language. The characters in their plays are types, each representative of many men, and, just as there is the concentration of several persons in the one dramatic figure, so the authors endeavour to concentrate in a few patterned phrases what might have had to be otherwise expressed in hundreds or thousands of words.

So far no one in England has [illegible]

a [illegible]

pl [illegible]

trifle uneasily—although it must be confessed that gradually our ears are becoming attuned to the newer Continental style. Somewhat in the German manner, although without the utilization of any fresh medium of expression, is Mr C. K. Munro's interesting play, *The Rumour* (1924). Here, in the short, significant scenes which appear to be adapted from the cinema technique, the author has told the story of [illegible]

Progress (1925) appears simply as an imitation of *The Rumour* without the vital force which gives such distinction to the earlier play.

By far the greatest achievement in what may for convenience be called the 'Continental' manner is the second act of Mr Sean O'Casey's *The Silver Tassie* (1929), a play which may be regarded in the future as perhaps the most powerful tragic drama of our time. Mr O'Casey's first works were cast in the realistic mould as modified by earlier Irish writers. Quite clearly he was intent on doing for the poor in Dublin what Synge had done for the peasantry, and in *Juno and the Paycock* (1925) and *The Shadow of a Gunman* (1927) he produced two brilliantly bitter studies of Irish life. These at once marked him out as among the most gifted of latter-day playwrights. Both plays were far surpassed by *The Silver Tassie*, which, with its sweep from laughter to tragedy, proved the breadth and power of his genius. *The Silver Tassie* has been criticized because it combined two methods—the naturalistic and the expressionistic—but the skill with which Mr O'Casey has allowed the one to drift into the other ought to have silenced such judgments. Nothing greater or finer in the modern theatre has been done than the majestically bitter chants at the altar of the gun or the restless, agitated movement of the third act of this play. *The Silver Tassie* is, without question, one of the greatest plays of our generation.

Entirely different in character, yet linked to it by its theme, stands Mr Reginald Berkeley's *The White Château* (1927). The method adopted here is similar to that of Mr Munro's *The Rumour*, with the addition of verse links akin to those utilized by Mr Drinkwater in *Abraham Lincoln*. Its passion is not so intense or its bitterness so acute as the passion and the bitterness of *The Silver Tassie*, but it too has power, dignity, and distinction. Among Mr Berkeley's other works may be mentioned the brilliantly incisive wireless play called *The Quest of Elizabeth* (1926), in which naturalism and fancy are mingled with a sure and exquisite touch. The child's dream-world, the floating dreams of the fettered spirit, is united to the conversation in the hospital ward

delicately and with masterly precision. Mr Berkeley veers in *Eight o'Clock* (1920; 1926) and *Mango Island* (1926) to pure realism, but in *The World's End* (1926) he again unites the two styles, less satisfactorily than in *The White Château*. *The World's End* displays him as a follower of Sir James Barrie and Lord Dunsany. The idea of this play is that there is an inn, "The World's End," in which has gathered [illegible] ning and darkness descends. The following act shows each granted his secret longing, and each once more dissatisfied. In a moment of anger Imogen reverses her wish and they are cast back into their old spheres. Less successful, but none the less interesting, is *Machines* (1927), a clever attempt to adapt a modern subject to the requirements of the microphone.

Experimentation on similar lines has been carried out by [illegible] harmony between the subject and its treatment. Mr Rubinstein, however, is an interesting pioneer, and in this play, as well as in *Isabel's Eleven* (1927), he is obviously endeavouring to express something new in dramatic form.

Most of such English experiments in the 'Continental' style have not attempted anything violently revolutionary; rather has the attempt been made so to adapt the familiar naturalistic method as to make it in some measure accord with the newer tendencies. In the majority of those efforts which consciously and deliberately aim at the utilization of more modern dramatic devices, too, it may be noted that there is a certain atmosphere of stiffness and artificiality, as though the fresh garments sat rather uncomfortably on shoulders accustomed to older modes. A typical example of this may be found in Mr W. J. Turner's *The Man who ate the*

Popomack (1922). In his preface Mr Turner defends t[he] 'construction' of the play, declaring that he has aimed [at] something new, something which cannot be assessed b[y] ordinary 'academic' standards. Novelty in form, however, can never be justified merely as novelty; if it is to hav[e] justification that must come from the success with which the new form expresses the theme of the play. In *The Man who ate the Popomack* there is, first, a disastrous mingling of purely farcical and would-be tragic moods; one man who eats of the evil-smelling fruit ensconces himself in a diver's suit, while the other, in his isolation amid life, commits suicide. Secondly, there is a utilization of two entirely distinct dramatic conventions in such a manner as inevitably to cause confusion in the mind of the audience. In one a picture is given of events which actually happened years before; in the other a picture is presented of events which might have but did not in reality occur. There seems, in other words, a mingling, merely for the sake of novelty and not because of any inherent necessity, of diverse experimental moods and styles. Perhaps one might criticize similarly Mr Hermon Ould's *The Dance of Life* (1924). Here certainly is something infinitely more harmonious and artistically conceived, something that more definitely approaches what certain Continental playwrights have been aiming at. The main weakness lies not in a confusion of moods and conventions, but in the lack of a philosophic convention large enough to warrant the treatment. When closely analysed the theme itself is seen not to possess that significance or grandeur which we are led, from the method of treatment, to expect. Miss Velona Pilcher's *The Searcher* (1930) fails likewise through lack of sufficient basic strength. What will develop out of these experiments cannot possibly be prophesied; all that may be said is that so far, save for [one] play by Mr Munro and one play by Mr O'Casey, these [for]ms of expression have not succeeded in giving very much [of p]ermanent value to the English theatre, and that, apart [fro]m a few experiments by Sir Barry Jackson, Mr Terence [Gray], and Mr Peter Godfrey, the English playhouses have [fough]t shy of such newer 'Continental' styles.

CHAPTER VII

THE HISTORICAL DRAMA

PERHAPS the most hopeful and promising of all movements in the English stage of to-day is the rapid

> The historical dramatist stands, in relation to the playwright of modern life, somewhat as a portrait-painter does in relation to a photograph. He gives—or tries to give—the essentials of human emotion and experience: not an exact rendering of somebody's actual speech but an impression of what that somebody is feeling.

This judgment may be over-severe on the naturalists of the past generation, and it may also be partly negatived by a consideration of the higher realism achieved by such men as Ibsen and Tchechov, but in essentials it gives perfectly just expression to the idea behind this 'historical' movement. Here is the opportunity for introducing something of poetry.

> The figures in a costume-play can be a little larger than life: that is to say that, without offending our sense of reality, they can express themselves a little more richly than figures which are photographed, as exactly as possible from the life which we see around us.

The mood and the diction of poetry may thus be introduced as these could not be introduced into a 'repertory' play of 1910.

period such dra

Mr Shaw, always individual, wrote of Cæsar and Napoleon; but, apart from his work and that of the purely poetic school, it is hard to name any plays of this kind apart from the interesting Irish dramas of Lady Gregory and Mr Lennox Robinson. As a definite movement in the theatre the historical play [illegible]ance till about the year 1920. Its significance may be gauged by the fact that many of the elder writers have turned, during recent years, to experiment in this form. Mr Shaw in 1923 produced his *Saint Joan*, the success of which indicated the willingness of the public to welcome the costume drama. Mr St John Ervine followed with an exceedingly interesting variant wherein, instead of actual historical persons, the characters of one of Shakespeare's comedies are chosen as *dramatis personæ*. *The Lady of Belmont* (1924) attempts in a way to do the exact opposite of what Dr Bottomley had done in *Gruach* and *King Lear's Wife*. Here, instead of providing a prologue, Mr Ervine has provided an epilogue. His criticism of *The Merchant of Venice* is no less penetrating and significant than was Dr Bottomley's of *Lear*. He has assessed the Shakespearian characters at their true value and, carrying them beyond the stage at which they had been left, shows with remorseless logic what they were fated by their natures to become. In this play, as in his earlier domestic dramas and in his later comedy, Mr Ervine demonstrates his fine dramatic sense and his mastery of different styles. The costume comedies of Mr J. B. Fagan and Miss Dane's *Will Shakespeare* have been noted earlier, as well as the poetic dramas on historical themes of Mr Masefield.

The close association between the poetic school and this historical school is well exemplified by Mr John Drinkwater and by Mr Clifford Bax. Both are writers of verse, and both, as it were, moved from the utilization of verse as a dramatic medium to the employment of a prose richer than that allowed in ordinary naturalistic drama. Mr Drinkwater's earlier poetic plays have been considered above: none of these won great success, but when, in 1918, he produced *Abraham Lincoln* he achieved something which almost immediately brought him to international fame. That play was

followed by several other historical dramas—*Mary Stuart* (1921; revised 1922), *Oliver Cromwell* (1922), and *Robert E.* [illegible]

study of a more social question, that of woman's, or of a woman's, soul. For Mr Drinkwater there are some women who have hearts so wide, who have ideals so high, that they cannot find any one man great enough to satisfy their soul's

Mr Bax's work in the drama is no less significant. He is ever seeking after style, and that style, he finds, may best be achieved through the writing of the costume play. His dramatic productions are, as is well known, diverse, extending from such an essay, written in almost a naturalistic manner, as *Up Stream* (1922; acted 1925), or such graceful verse sketches as are included in *Polite Satires* (1922), or such pieces of entertaining fantasy as *Midsummer Madness* (1923; produced 1924), a *commedia dell' arte* theme in prose and aria, *Nocturne in Palermo* (1924), in rimed verse and aria, and *Old King Cole* (1921), or such 'ballad operas' as *Mr Pepys* (1926), to the later *Socrates* (1930), *The Venetian* (1931), *The Immortal Lady* (1931), and *The Rose without a Thorn* (1931; produced 1932); it is among the last-mentioned plays, however, that his dramatic power has found expression least fettered and most gracious. *Socrates* may be too motionless in physical action for the ordinary theatre, but its delicately appreciative treatment of the Socratic method and its clearly conceived characters m[illegible]ys. S[illegible]lly and chastely poetic; *The Venetian* is essentially lyrical, and so stands, as it were, at the opposite extreme. Between these two comes *The Rose without a Thorn*, which, from the point of v[illegible] audience, is probably [illegible]ere both the lyrical mo[illegible]hilosophically contemplative tendencies of *Socrates* are avoided, and the author has set himself to develop characters within a pattern, based on historic fact, but shaped by [illegible]. Maybe a certain loss of significant stress is f[illegible] makes Henry break down in tears at the preliminary trial scene, so that his last solitary cry at the end lacks some of its effectiveness, but, taken as a whole, this play too is assuredly one of the most important and beautifully constructed historical dramas of our time. Reading or seeing these plays, one realizes that Mr Bax is of the dramatists of this generation whose plays will live. His effective treatment of character, his skilful wielding of material, and

his delicate sense of style combine in giving prime distinction to his work.

Besides Mr Drinkwater and Mr Bax, several other playwrights have aimed at this reintroduction of style in the theatre, chiefly by the cultivation of historical themes. Among these Mr Ashley Dukes immediately claims attention. His most popular play, the well-known *The Man with a Load of Mischief* (1924), is not, of course, 'historical,' but that word is here used to include costume plays of any kind and is not restricted merely to dramas in which historical figures are the chief characters. The thing t

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Five Plays of Other Times (1931). Of these *The Fountain Head* (1928), with its invented theme, most nearly approaches *The Man with a Load of Mischief*, but what is possibly the finest drama in this collection, *Tyl Ulenspiegel* (performed at Brussels in a translation by Emile Cammaerts, 1927), turns for subject-matter to historic fact.

cessful *première* at the Malvern Festival, ran for nearly a year and a half in London. This drama too aims at a richer style than the naturalistic method can permit, and adds to the poetic atmosphere by taking as its chief figures Robert Browning and his wife. Partly its theatrical triump ... ric Hardw ... ng, and M ... ven with le ... red popular, for Mr Besier, very skilfully, has here built up what might be regarded as a literary melodrama. The

melodrama, with its villain, hero, and heroine, had seized upon certain essentially appealing dramatic types and situations; its popularity was based on that. In Mr Besier's study of poetic passion and strange perverted instinct the essential basis is the melodramatic basis with frail heroine in villain's power and noble hero prepared to overcome all obstacles in order to win her love. This statement is not intended to imply any adverse criticism of Mr Besier's drama; rather is it designed to show how much more effective and strong are the imaginative dramatists of to-day than were the Tennysons of the past. In the theatre the elements of popular appeal may not be neglected, and Mr Besier's work might be taken as symbolic of the modern re-wedding of popular situation (melodrama) and imaginative literary force: out of such a union rose, too, the drama of the Elizabethan period.

While all his work does not belong to this kind, Mr James Bridie challenges attention here. The Scots school of playwrights did not produce, in the first decades of this century, such a masterly array of dramas as Ireland had done. Sir James Barrie, of course, is Scots, but his better plays are not specifically local, and his sentimentalism, although allied to a kind of sentimentalism once popular in the North, is a thing personal to himself. Recent interest in the theatre, however, has contributed toward the development of a distinctive Scots drama, much of which never reaches the London theatres. Many of the plays so far produced there have been of the naturalistic style, and still realism keeps its grip, as is exemplified in the works of Mr J. Corrie. On the other hand, Dr Gordon Bottomley had early shown the possibilities of a poetic treatment of Scots history; Mr J. A. Ferguson wrote a finely effective Scots historical drama in *Campbell of Kilmhor* (1915), as well as other pieces set in the historical past—for example, *The King of Morven* (1922); and Mr John Brandane in *The Glen is Mine* (1923; printed 1925) and *The Lifting* (1925) suggested still further possibilities in subject and treatment. The last few years, partly owing to the activities of the Scottish Community Drama Association and

the Scottish National Theatre Society, have witnessed the appearance of quite a number of experiments on these lines, but so far only one dramatist has succeeded in reaching beyond the local and achieving general appeal. Mr James Bridie does not, it is true, always deal with specifically Scots subject-matter, but a great deal of his strength, like the strength of Synge and Mr O'Casey, comes from his knowledge and appreciation of national types. It were impossible here to survey the entirety of his published works, but some few may be chosen for representative treatment. *The Anatomist* (1931) and *Tobias and the Angel* (1931), because of their London productions by Mr Anmer Hall, are the best known, and both exhibit characteristic qualities. Mr Bridie's strength lies in his versatility. He can depict with a sureness of touch the degrading atmosphere of the low Edinburgh tavern, and he can play charmingly with whimsical comedy. He possesses, too, a great sense of dramatic contrast—the contrast of the cynically blunt Dr Knox and the prim denizens of a respectable drawing-room, the contrast of timid little Tobias and the archangel disguised as a porter. These things give strength and forcefulness to the two plays. Where, so far, Mr Bridie fails is in an appreciation of larger theatrical technique. The magnificent tavern scene in *The Anatomist* is spoilt by the drawing-room act that follows; the beauty of the archangel's talk with Tobias' wife is partly lost by the conversion that ensues. Nor has he retained sufficient of that element of surprise which is of the essence of drama. This is exemplified in *The Switchback* (1930), where a brilliant first act is not followed by material adequately novel and vital. All these, however, are weaknesses which can be remedied, and it may be conjectured that, with his versatility, his wit, and his grasp of character, Mr Bridie will produce something of even greater worth than *The Anatomist* and *Tobias*, striking and beautiful though these plays be. Already he has shown himself one of the half-dozen younger dramatists whose work exhibits sterling excellence; he has all the fundamental qualities demanded of the truly great playwright.

Many other plays written on themes of the past have been produced during the last ten or fifteen years. Mr Shane Leslie takes the seventeen-eighties as his period in *The Delightful, Diverting, and Devotional Play of Mrs Fitzherbert* (1928), in which, however, the dialogue seems unsatisfactory by reason of a certain tone of artificiality. In *Charles and Mary* (1930) Miss Joan Temple not ineffectively deals with Lamb and his sister. The period of Henri IV is taken by Mr Conal O'Riordan (Norreys Connell) in his cleverly handled *His Majesty's Pleasure*, which, originally contributed to *The Irish Review* in 1912, was published in revised and expanded form in 1925. For the theme of *Krishna Kumari* (1924) Mr Edward Thompson turns to the East, writing of India in 1806. This is an exceedingly interesting drama, but fails because of too great dependence upon historical notes, the deferring of Krishna's introduction till the third act, and the weakness in the character of Bhim Singh. English history for the most part interests Mr Howard Peacey. Mr Peacey clearly has a skill in the devising of situation, together with a neat and effective style in dialogue; unfortunately, his larger conception of the themes he has chosen wants precision and firmness. Of this *Warren Hastings* (1928) provides a good example. Up to a point our interest is aroused and kept intent on the characters; the strife of Hastings and Philip Francis, the love between the former and Baroness Imhoff, and the personality of Sir Elijah Impey, Hastings' elephantine friend, all are treated in a manner at once vital and arresting. The weakness of the play rests in the fact that the central theme is dealt with somewhat lifelessly and without stronger vision. The sentimental talk concerning the union of India under British control seems wholly out of character. The same weakness is traceable in *El Dorado* (1925), which is confusing through want of definite orientation, and in *The Fifth of November* (1924), where the action is lost in a multiplicity of characters and where the characters themselves are conceived in a sentimental light. In these plays Mr Peacey seems hardly to have got above the historical facts with which he deals; perhaps the "Tables

of Events" which he appends to *Warren Hastings* and to *The Fifth of November* are symbolic. On the other hand, his writing has distinction, and there is much of promise in his work.

Perhaps here might be considered, too, such a play as Mr G. D. Gribble's *The Masque of Venice* (1924), which, although not historical, is sufficiently removed from the ordinary life around us to partake of the impression which it is the aim of the historical dramatists to produce. While *The Masque of Venice* contains some good scenes, a lack of harmony seriously militates against its worth. The characters of Egeria and Mumford want definite features and that of Sophia Weir, the "literary Celebrity," is strained and ineffective. Mr Gribble seems to have fallen here between the stools of satire (shown in the portrait of Joshua Cox) and of serious intent. A strange experiment has been made by Mr Sutton Vane in *Outward Bound* (1923). Once more in this play the characters are presented as though they belonged to everyday life, although it gradually becomes clear that they live no longer among us. The first act of *Outward Bound* contains what is possibly the finest surprise scene in modern drama; the way in which the discovery is made to the audience that the liner is a liner of the dead is handled in a skilful manner. Often surprises of this kind destroy the effect of the plays in which they are introduced; Mr Vane's technical brilliance is shown by his ability to keep our interest alive in his characters throughout the drama. Somewhat similar to *Outward Bound* is Mr Laurence Housman's *Possession* (1921), "A Peep-show in Paradise" where a kindred surprise is sprung upon the audience. Mr Housman's faintly cynical sentimentalism and subacid humour serve him well here, as they do in his companion studies of Victorian life published as *Angels and Ministers* (1921)—notably in *The Queen: God Bless Her!* and *The Comforter*. Perhaps, however, Mr Housman is still better known for his charming series of *Little Plays of St Francis* (1922).

In such ways has drama been moving during the last few

years. Obviously we are at present in a stage of transition and hardly have made up our minds as to where precisely we stand. The old naturalistic method can still make an appeal when it is handled strongly by a Mr Van Druten; the spectacular show wins a success in *The White Horse Inn, Cavalcade, Waltzes from Vienna*; the newer experiments in non-realistic and non-spectacular drama quite clearly excite, too, an interest among at least certain sections of the community. Things have been moving rapidly in the dramatic world; fresh technical methods have been required for the silent film, for the 'talkie,' and for the wireless play. So far, perhaps, we have not adapted ourselves fully to the changed conditions, and hesitate, sometimes bewildered, amid conflicting ideals—between the appeal to the eye, derived from the example of the film, and the appeal to the ear, derived from the example of the radio; between the literary tradition of the Shavian stage direction and the stage direction, almost non-existent, of the broadcast drama; between the rational desire to find in the theatre a reflection of current life, a treatment of daily problems, and a longing to escape into a more imaginative realm where the present is forgotten in the images either of the historical past or of a fanciful invention.

Whatever confusion there may be, however, and whatever failure may occur, it is certain that that 'renascence of English Drama' heralded in the nineties of the last century has not lost its vital force. An age becomes weak dramatically when all it can think of is imitation of past models; the remarkable development of the imaginative play in recent years and the no less remarkable experimentation in novel forms of expression, demonstrate the keenly flowing life force which courses through the theatre of to-day. That life force has been stimulated considerably by the art of the cinema and the art of the wireless play, so that what at first seemed, and to many still seems, to threaten the success of the regular theatre may perhaps be regarded as the instrument by means of which the stage will grow in power to produce something even finer than the rich four decades from 1890 to 1930 have already given to us.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. NOTES ON CRITICAL WORKS

THE following list of books on English drama is necessarily selective. It is intended merely as a preliminary guide for students who may wish to devote special attention to one particular period, and must be supplemented by reference to more exhaustive bibliographies contained in some of the larger works cited below.

(1) Dictionaries

There is no exhaustive reference-book for English drama, although one such is now in active preparation. Up to 1812 the *Biographia Dramatica* of Isaac Reed and Stephen Jones is incomparably the best. Additional details may be gained from various earlier dramatic dictionaries, such as those of Langbaine, Jacob, and Whincop. Research students should also note the annotated copies of Langbaine in the British Museum, as well as the separate manuscript collections there. More recently were published *The 'Stage' Encyclopædia*, brief but comprehensive, and the more ambitious *Dictionary of the Drama*, by W. Davenport Adams, which, unfortunately, was left incomplete at the letter G. For the Elizabethan theatre F. G. Fleay's *Biographical Chronicle of the English Drama* (1891) and *A Chronicle History of the London Stage* (1890) are valuable and suggestive, although now out of date. Bibliographical information is provided in his lists of plays and masques (1900 and 1902) by W. W. Greg, who is at present engaged on a more exhaustive survey of the printed works of the period. For the later drama lists of playwrights and of plays are given as appendices to the present writer's histories of *Restoration Drama* (1925), *Early Eighteenth-century Drama* (1925), *Late Eighteenth-century Drama* (1927), and *Early Nineteenth-century Drama* (1930). J. Genest, in his *History of the Drama and Stage in England*, carries his chronological survey of performances up to 1830. Of modern works Thomas H. Dickinson (in *The Contemporary Drama of England*, 1917), A. E. Morgan (in *Tendencies of Modern English Drama*, 1923), and Barrett H. Clark (in *A Study*

of the Modern Drama, 1295) give selected dictionaries. The last-mentioned work is most complete from this point of view, but its worth is lessened by the fact that the dates given are often only of American publication or performance. A good survey of English theatrical literature, especially that of the eighteenth century, is provided in R. W. Lowe's *English Theatrical Literature* (1887).

(ii) General Histories

General histories of the drama are few in number. *The Cambridge History of English Literature* (referred to hereafter as *C.H.E.L.*) devotes two volumes (v and vi) to the medieval and Elizabethan stage, and has separate chapters in other volumes on dramatic development up to the end of the nineteenth century. Most of these chapters are short, and are marred by the fact that the dramatic works of men more famous as poets or novelists are abstracted from the chapters which deal with the theatre. The bibliographies, however, should be noted. F. E. Schelling has a work on *English Drama* (1914) containing a vast amount of information, but somewhat overstressing the Elizabethan period, and there is the *Short History of the English Drama* by Benjamin Brawley (1922), a useful general guide, as well as H. F. Rubinstein's brilliantly suggestive sketch, *The English Drama* (1928). Ashley Dukes' *Drama* (1926) and A. H. Thorndike's *English Comedy* (1929) are valuable studies. R. Farquharson Sharp has *A Short History of the English Stage* (1909), and the present writer has a sketch of *The English Stage* (1928), as well as a more comprehensive *The Development of the Theatre* (1927).

(iii) Medieval

On medieval drama the standard authority is Sir E. K. Chambers' *The Mediæval Stage* (1903), and most histories of Elizabethan theatrical endeavour have sections on the miracles and moralities. Most important are the *History of English Dramatic Literature* (1899), by Sir A. W. Ward, wherein the development of the drama is carried as far as 1714, F. E. Schelling's *Elizabethan Drama* (1908), a work of scholarship and fine criticism, W. Creizenach's *Geschichte des neueren Dramas* (1893–1909), W. J. Courthope's *History of English Poetry* (1895–1903), C. M. Gayley's *Plays of Our Forefathers* (1909), and J. J. Jusserand's *Literary History of the English People* (1907–9). A. W. Pollard has an illuminating preface to his *English Miracle Plays* (latest edn. 1923),

and there is interesting critical matter in J. M. Manly's *Specimens of Pre-Shakespearean Drama* (1900–3). There are many reprints of medieval plays. Besides the texts in the last-mentioned volumes, the *Ludus Coventriæ* has been edited by J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps (Shakespeare Society, 1841) and by Miss K. S. Block (Early English Text Society, 1922), and the two Coventry cycle plays appear in the E.E.T.S. publications, edited by H. Craig. The York plays have been reprinted by Miss Lucy Toulmin Smith (1885) and the Towneley mysteries by A. W. Pollard (E.E.T.S., 1897). Other miracle plays have been included in the E.E.T.S. series, still others in *Anglia* (vols. vii, xxi, xxx) and *Englische Studien* (vol. xxvi). The moralities, also, have been fairly fully edited. Specimens may be found in the volumes of the Malone Society, the E.E.T.S., and in the "Tudor Facsimile Texts" series, edited by J. S. Farmer. Most of these are accompanied by critical matter.

(iv) Elizabethan

Texts of Elizabethan plays are numerous. Gifford, Dyce, Bullen, and others have edited the works of many individual authors, and Farmer's facsimile reprints as well as the Malone Society type facsimiles provide accurate reproductions of the originals. There are, besides, many modernized reprints, *e.g.*, the "Mermaid" series and the specimens of pre-Shakespearian drama in the "Everyman's Library." It can never be too often insisted upon that these reprints are fundamentally useless to the serious student. The only useful reprints possible are the accurate line-for-line facsimiles, such as the Malone Society provides. The "Cambridge Classics" series (including Beaumont and Fletcher) is good, as are the Kyd, Greene, Jonson, and Lyly, published by the Oxford Press. A new Marlowe has recently been published in several volumes by Routledge. For several selected plays the "Belles Lettres" series provides adequate texts with full and illuminating introductions. Fuller details may be obtained from the appendix to volumes v and vi of the *C.H.E.L.*

The critical work on the Elizabethan dramatic literature is vast. Above, under (iii), have been indicated some of the principal books, but no serious study of this period can be attempted without a detailed investigation into particular problems. The very full list of books in Sir E. K. Chambers' monumental *The Elizabethan Stage* (1923) will give many suggestions for specialized reading. Among the general surveys, apart from those noted

above, may be mentioned A. W. Reed's *Early Tudor Drama* (1926), C. F. Tucker Brooke's *Tudor Drama* (1911), J. A. Symonds' *Shakespeare's Predecessors in the English Drama* (1900), F. S. Boas' *Shakspere and his Predecessors* (1895), A. J. F. Mézières' *Prédécesseurs et contemporains de Shakespeare* (3rd edn. 1881), and Janet Spens' *Elizabethan Drama* (1922). Valuable comment is provided in J. J. Jusserand's *Le théâtre en Angleterre jusqu'aux prédécesseurs immédiats de Shakespeare* (3rd edn. 1881), and there is a mass of information in J. P. Collier's *History of English Dramatic Poetry* (1879). This last work must, however, be used with care, as Collier was an incorrigible forger, and many of the documents cited in his work existed nowhere but in his own mind. J. L. Klein's *Geschichte des Dramas* (1886) contains some valuable matter, as does R. Prölss' *Geschichte des neueren Dramas* (1883). Taine's *Histoire de la littérature anglaise* (1864; translated 1872) contains no matter of research, but interesting critical judgments are numerous.

(v) Shakespearian

The Shakespeare literature is vast, and only one or two works can be mentioned here. The Life is best told by Sir Sidney Lee (latest edn. 1925). Sir E. K. Chambers' *William Shakespeare* (1930) essays rather a "study of facts and problems" than a biography. For the student J. Dover Wilson's *The Essential Shakespeare* (1932) should prove suggestive. Most of the other "Lives," such as that by Sir Walter Raleigh, are valuable for criticism, not for fact. Sir Sidney Lee's book contains notices of many works on Shakespeare; these notices may be supplemented by reference to Sir E. K. Chambers' volumes or to the *Shakespeare Bibliography* (1931) by Ebisch and Schücking. Critical studies, of very varying value, abound. Several important eighteenth-century essays have been collected together by D. Nichol Smith (1903), and E. Walder has a study on *Shakespearean Criticism, Textual and Literary, from Dryden to the End of the Eighteenth Century* (1895). If reference is required direct to the original texts a start might be made with Thomas Rymer's *A Short View of Tragedy* (1693), Dryden's *Essay of Dramatick Poesie* (1668), Farmer's *An Essay on the Learning of Shakespeare* (1767), and Morgann's *Essay on Sir John Falstaff* (1777). The prefaces of the various editors—Rowe, Pope, Theobald, and Johnson especially—should likewise be noticed. Earlier criticism will be found in *The Shakespere Allusion Book* (1932). Of romantic critical work

that of S. T. Coleridge in *Notes and Lectures on Shakespeare* (1849), of W. Hazlitt in *Characters of Shakespear's Plays* (1817), and of A. C. Swinburne in *A Study of Shakespeare* (1880) are probably the most important. Recent criticism, however, has largely supplanted the old. A. C. Bradley's *Shakespearean Tragedy* (1904) proved epoch-making, as did E. Dowden's *Shakespere: His Mind and Art* (1874) and G. P. Baker's *The Development of Shakespeare as a Dramatist* (1907). Among other works might be mentioned Sir Walter Raleigh's *Shakespeare* (1907), R. G. Moulton's *Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist* (1885), T. R. Lounsbury's *Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist* (1901; giving an excellent survey of some eighteenth-century editors), J. C. Collins' *Studies in Shakespeare* (1904), G. Brandes' *William Shakespeare* (1896), J. Brander Matthews' *Shakespeare as a Playwright* (1913), and E. E. Stoll's *Shakespeare Studies* (1927).

Several particular problems require more detailed investigation. The question of bibliography is one that to-day has assumed special importance owing to the researches of A. W. Pollard, W. W. Greg, and others. No better start could be made [illegible]

[illegible] Dates in Shakespearean Quartos" (*The Library*, 1908 and 1910). H. R. Plomer, in the same journal for 1906, has an essay on "The Printers of Shakespeare's Plays and Poems," and [illegible]

Oxford University Press.

A true investigation of the various problems connected with this can be undertaken only when reference is made direct to the original Shakespearian texts. The First Folio has been several times reprinted. The best of these reproductions is that edited by Sir Sidney Lee (1902), but the Methuen facsimile (1902) is less costly and provides a suitable working text. The reduced reprint (1876) of J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps is too small for convenient usage. The later folios are all represented in the Methuen series. The quarto texts are nearly all available in reprints. Forty-eight were issued under the editorship of Halliwell-Phillipps between 1862 and 1871; forty-three were later printed under the direction of F. J. Furnivall between 1880 and 1889. Several

other diverse texts have been variously edited. For the majority of these plays the Furness *Variorum* edition, a truly monumental work, will be found invaluable. While it does not obviate the necessity of referring to the originals it provides in its textual readings no less than in its massive notes material which no student of Shakespeare can ever lay aside.

The problems of Shakespeare's text, which, it may be noted, have taken a fresh colouring since the recent investigations into the play of *Sir Thomas More* (see the essay by Sir E. Maunde Thompson and *Shakespeare's Hand in "Sir Thomas More"* (1923)), may be related to the discussions concerning the authorship of the plays. Here J. M. Robertson's books are invaluable; special attention should be devoted to his *The Shakespeare Canon* (1922–32). Other essays by A. E. Morgan (on *Henry V*), by Dugdale Sykes (on *The Taming of the Shrew*), and by J. Parrott (on *Timon*) might be compared with this work. An attack on J. M. Robertson's theories appears in a lecture on *The Disintegration of Shakespeare* by Sir E. K. Chambers (1924).

This question of the authorship of the plays necessitates a study of the "Shakespeare Apocrypha" and of Shakespeare's sources. On the former reference should be made to A. F. Hopkinson's *Essays on Shakespeare's Doubtful Plays* (1900). The texts are all given in C. F. Tucker Brooke's *The Shakespeare Apocrypha* (1908), and some of them have been facsimiled. J. P. Collier edited a number of the source-books in *Shakespeare's Library* (re-edited by Hazlitt, 1875). The series of "Shakespeare Classics," under the general editorship of Sir Israel Gollancz, also presents many of the original texts in a modernized form.

The history of Shakespeare's plays on the English stage has been excellently told by G. C. D. Odell in his *Shakespeare from Betterton to Irving* (1922) and by Hazelton Spencer in *Shakespeare Improved* (1927), while there are many works dealing with his influence upon the Continent. A good, though brief, survey of these is given in Sir Sidney Lee's *Life*.

The study of the Shakespearian theatres is an important one. The most exhaustive account is in Sir E. K. Chambers' *The Elizabethan Stage*, but for a full discussion of the various theories reference may be made as well to other earlier works. Of these most significant are W. J. Lawrence's *The Elizabethan Playhouse and Other Studies* (two series, 1912 and 1913), J. Q. Adams' *Shakespearean Playhouses* (1917), and A. H. Thorndike's *Shakespeare's Theatre* (1916), as well as the various articles by G. F.

Reynolds and T. A. Graves. A. Feuillerat's *Documents relating* [illegible] *Edward VI* [illegible] *Office of the* [illegible] *bureau des menus-plaisirs et la mise en scène à la cour d'Elizabeth* (1910), Tucker Murray's *Elizabethan Dramatic Companies* (1910), and J. Q. Adams' *The Dramatic Records of Sir Henry Herbert* (1918) [illegible]

kindred subjects in *Shakespeare's England* (1917). A reference to Sir E. K. Chambers' volume will indicate the numerous other books and articles on these and kindred subjects.

(vi) Late Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Century

Besides the general studies mentioned above there are many works on particular writers of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. On the early tragic writers J. W. Cunliffe's *The Influence of Seneca on Elizabethan Tragedy* (1907), as well as the introduction to the works of Sir William Alexander (1922), edited by L. E. Kastner and H. B. Charlton, should be consulted. F. E. Schelling has an interesting study on George Gascoigne (1893), and this might be supplemented by J. W. Cunliffe's "The Influence of Italian on Elizabethan Drama" (*Modern Philology*, 1907). Heywood's work has been recently investigated in detail by A. W. Reed, and there are numerous articles on the various early moralities and interludes.

The new Marlowe, cited above, contains much fresh matter [illegible]

[illegible] All these works mentioned contain valuable introductory and explanatory matter.

New material has been gathered concerning Anthony Munday by Miss St Clair Byrne (see *The Library*), and some of his plays are represented in the Malone Society texts. The Jonson literature is large. C. H. Herford and P. Simpson projected a

fresh text; the first volumes of this have been recently published. A volume in the "English Men of Letters" series (by G. Gregory Smith) gives an excellent summary of his life and dramatic activities. A fairly full list of articles and critical studies is given in the *C.H.E.L.*, vol. vi. Particular notice should be taken of Castelain's *Ben Jonson* (1907). In 1922 was published a *Jonson Allusion Book*, edited by J. Q. Adams and J. F. Bradley, giving critical matter concerning Jonson's works up to the end of the seventeenth century. Mina Kerr's *Influence of Ben Jonson on English Comedy* (1912) contains some useful material. The only complete Dekker is that issued in Pearson's reprints (1873), but it gives a poor text. E. E. Stoll has an essay on "Jonson's Influence on Dekker" (*Modern Language Notes*, vol. xxi), and Swinburne another on his general work (*Nineteenth Century*, 1887). A good critical edition of his many plays is much to be desired. Chapman has found a modern critic in T. M. Parrott, whose *Comedies of Chapman* (1910–14) and selections in the "Belles Lettres" series (1907) have become standard. On his relationship to Shakespeare, A. Acheson has an illuminating, but somewhat exaggerated, study entitled *Shakespeare and the Rival Poet* (1903). Middleton's works have been edited by A. H. Bullen (1885–86); this is the best, but not a perfectly satisfactory edition. There are many articles on the subject of the Middleton-Rowley collaboration. No good edition of Massinger exists, but there is an excellent critical study by A. Cruickshank (1920), which summarizes much of the discussion concerning the Massinger-Fletcher problem. The best editions of Beaumont and Fletcher's works are those edited by A. H. Bullen (1904, incomplete) and by A. L. Waller and A. Glover (1905) respectively. Boyle, Bullen, Fleay, Dugdale Sykes, E. H. C. Oliphant and others have written much on the question of the authorship of these dramas. A. H. Thorndike's *Influence of Beaumont and Fletcher upon Shakespeare* (1901) is an important study.

Marston's works have been collected and edited both by Bullen (1887) and by A. B. Grosart (1879). *Antonio and Mellida* is included in the Malone Society reprints. There is no adequate study of his life and work, although detailed research has thrown light on certain aspects of his career (see J. H. Penniman's *The War of the Theatres*, 1897, and the various articles and studies on the "Poetomachia"). Tourneur's plays have been edited by the present writer (1930) and Webster's works by F. L. Lucas (1929). There are many essays on problems connected with particular plays by these two men; a fairly full list up to the date of

its publication will be found in the *C.H.E.L.*, vol. vi. Rupert Brooke's *John Webster and the Elizabethan Drama* (1916) is an interesting later study. W. Bang has edited part of Ford's dramatic works (1908), but there is no authoritative and exhaustive study of his career. A good study of Shirley has [illegible] ord [illegible] is [illegible] H. Swartz's essay on Suckling and E. K. R. Faust's *Richard Brome* (1887) will be found useful. A new edition of Heywood is greatly to be desired; Otelia Cromwell has an essay surveying the general course of his career (1928). The University drama has been adequately treated by F. S. Boas (*University Drama in the Tudor Age*, 1914) and by G. C. Moore Smith (particularly his *College Plays*, 1923).

The standard work on the masque is that of A. Reyher (*Les masques anglais*, 1909). Reference might also be made to R. Brotanek's volume on the same subject (1902) and Enid Welsford's *The Court Masque* (1927). A bibliographical list of printed masques is given by W. W. Greg. Notice should be taken also of J. Nichols' *Progresses of Queen Elizabeth* (1823) and *Progresses of King James* (1828). An interesting volume on Inigo Jones' masque designs has been issued by the Walpole and Malone Societies (1924). On the Elizabethan pastoral see W. W. Greg's *Pastoral Poetry and Pastoral Drama* (1906), and for the later development of this type Jeanette Marks' *English Pastoral Drama* (1914).

(vii) Restoration

The drama of the later seventeenth century has been dealt with in the present writer's *History of Restoration Drama* (1925). [illegible] farther in point of date in *English* [illegible] 24). The [illegible] hase, and the comedy of manners of another by [illegible]. Recently H. E. Rollins has contributed to various periodicals (cf. *Studies in Philology*, 1921) valuable notes on drama in the Commonwealth period. A rare and entertaining contemporary work is John Downe's *Roscius Anglicanus* (1708). This, and Pepys' *Diary*, furnish a good deal of our information concerning the theatre at this time. Lily Campbell's *Scenes and Machines in the Renaissance* (1923), E. Thaler's *Shakespeare to Sheridan* (1922), R. W. Lowe's *Betterton* (1898), and J. W. Tupper's edition of two

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(vii) Restoration

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of D'Avenant's plays ("Belles Lettres" series, 1909) will be found useful. Beljame's *Le public et les hommes de lettres au dix-huitième siècle* (1898) is an important work, as are C. Perromat's study of Wycherley (1922), Bonamy Dobree's *Restoration Comedy* (1924) and *Restoration Tragedy* (1929), J. W. Krutch's *Comedy and Conscience after the Restoration* (1924), T. E. Perry's *The Comic Spirit in Restoration Drama* (1925), and K. M. Lynch's *The Social Mode in Restoration Comedy* (1926). D. H. Miles essays to survey *The Influence of Molière on Restoration Comedy* (1910). This might be read along with J. E. Gillet's *Molière en Angleterre* (1913). R. S. Forsythe's *A Study of the Plays of Thomas D'Urfey* (1916–17) contains some interesting material, and there are many important works on the career and literary activities of Dryden. The works of Dryden, Etherege, Wycherley, Congreve, Vanbrugh, Farquhar, and Otway have all been recently edited. Most of the other important authors of the period have had their works reprinted, but not always in a satisfactory form. Maidment and Logan's *Dramatists of the Restoration* is a useful series, but the text of the plays is unsatisfactory. A recent volume edited by D. H. Stevens, *Types of English Drama* (1923), includes a number of Restoration plays. Montague Summers' *Restoration Comedies* (1921) and *Shakespeare Adaptations* (1922) should also be consulted.

(viii) Eighteenth Century

The standard authority for the history of drama from 1660 to 1830 is that of Genest, but his work is little more than a series of excerpts from newspapers and bills, by no means complete. The development of drama during this period has been traced by the present writer. E. Bernbaum has an excellent study on *The Drama of Sensibility* (1915), and Bateson another on the comedy of the period (1929). G. Aitken's *Steele* (1889), W. L. Cross' *The History of Henry Fielding* (1910), and A. E. Gipson's *John Home* (1917) are important. F. E. Budd contributes an important introduction to his edition of Burnaby's works (1930). There is, besides, a large literature on Goldsmith and Sheridan. Some of the more valuable dramatic works of this period have been reprinted, and original editions are not so scarce as are those of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. D. F. Canfield's *Corneille and Racine in England* (1904) is important. For the domestic drama reference should be made to A. Eloesser's *Das bürgerliche Drama* (1898) and Sir A. W. Ward's edition of *The*

London Merchant ("Belles Lettres" series, 1906). F. Gaiffe's *Le drame en France au dix-huitième siècle* (1910) gives a clear account of the development of sentimental plays on the Parisian stage.

(ix) Modern

The present writer has a study of early nineteenth-century drama (1930). A fairly full list of contemporary treatises is given by R. W. Lowe. Much information, of course, can be gained from the standard lives of the principal poetic dramatists of the time. On the theatre of the later nineteenth century and of our present day, on the other hand, there are many important works. A. E. Morgan has published a valuable volume on [illegible] Suggestive studies [illegible] *f To-day* (1882) and [illegible] ones' *The Renascence of the English Drama* (1895), J. Knight's *Theatrical Notes* (1893), H. Morley's *The Journal of a London Playgoer* (1891), T. H. [illegible] *Stage* (1897), A. Henderson's *The Changing Drama* (1914), M. A. Franc's *Ibsen in England* (1919), C. Andrews' *The Drama To-day* (1913), W. L. Phelps' *Essays on Modern Dramatists* (1921), C. W. Scott's *The Drama of Yesterday and To-day* (1899), Watson Nicholson's *The Struggle for a Free Stage in London* (1906), J. Palmer's *The Censor and the Theatres* (1912), Storm Jameson's *Modern Drama in Europe* (1920), F. Vernon's *The Twentieth-century Theatre* (1924), Ivor Brown's *Parties of the Play* (1928), D. Byrne's *The Story of Ireland's National Theatre* (1929), A. E. Malone's *The Irish Drama* (1929), and M. Ellehange's *Striking Figures among Modern English Dramatists* (1931).

Barrett H. Clark gives a full list of modern works on the subject of dramatic theory in his *Study of the Modern Drama* and surveys past endeavour in *European Theories of the Drama*. A selected bibliography is given as an appendix to the present writer's *The Theory of Drama* (1931). Particular note should be taken also of the new ideals in stagecraft. Gordon Craig's works are of great value, and such books as Kenneth MacGowan's *Continental Stagecraft* (1922) should be read in close connexion with the main tendencies in modern drama.

II. SELECTED LIST OF PLAYS BY MINOR WRITERS

The following list is not intended to be in any way exhaustive. It includes merely the titles of some dramatic works which deserve attention either intrinsically or historically, but for which no room could be found in the text. The student of the theatre should note that many of these plays are of prime importance for an understanding of the audiences of the various periods and for an appreciation of dramatic development.

(i) To 1642

ALEXANDER, WILLIAM, EARL OF STIRLING. Important for the study of Senecan influence in England. The best edition is that prepared by L. E. Kastner and H. B. Charlton (1922).

ARMIN, ROBERT: *The History of the Two Maids of More-Clacke* (1609).

BARNES, BARNABE: *The Divil's Charter* (1607).

BARREY, LODOWICK: *Ram-Alley; Or Merrie-Tricks* (1611).

CAVENDISH, WILLIAM, DUKE OF NEWCASTLE. Important for his development of comedy. *The Country Captaine* (1649), *The Variety* (1649), *The Humorous Lovers* (1677), *The Triumphant Widow* (1677).

COWLEY, ABRAHAM: *The Guardian* (1650).

DABORNE, ROBERT: *The Poor-Man's Comfort* (1655).

DENHAM, SIR JOHN: *The Sophy* (1642).

FIELD, NATHANIEL: *A Woman is a Weather-cocke* (1612), *Amends for Ladies* (1618).

GOFFE, THOMAS: *The Raging Turke* (1631), *The Careles Shepherdess* (1656).

HAUGHTON, WILLIAM: *English-Men for my Money* (1616).

KILLIGREW, THOMAS: *Comedies and Tragedies* (1664).

LOWER, SIR WILLIAM. Important for his translations from Quinault and Corneille.

MARKHAM, GERVAS: *The Dumbe Knight* (1608).

MARMION, SHAKERLEY: *Hollands Leaguer* (1632), *The Antiquary* (1641).

MAY, THOMAS: *The Heire* (1633).

NABBES, THOMAS: *The Bride* (1640).

QUARLES, FRANCIS: *The Virgin Widow* (1649).

SHARPHAM, EDWARD: *Cupid's Whirligig* (1607).

TAILOR, ROBERT: *The Hogge hath lost his Pearle* (1614).

TATHAM, JOHN. Various plays, both before and after 1642.

TOMKIE, THOMAS: *Albumazar* (1615).

ANO[illegible]

Chaunticleres (1659).

(ii) 1660–1700

ARROWSMITH, ——: *The Reformation* (1673).

BANCROFT, JOHN: *King Edward the Third* (1691), *Henry the Second* (1693).

BETTERTON, THOMAS: *The Amorous Widow* (acted 1670; printed 1706), *The Revenge* (1680).

CARLISLE, JAMES: *The Fortune Hunters* (1689).

COTTON, CHARLES: *Horace* (1671).

D'AVENANT, DR CHARLES: *Circe* (1677).

DILKE, THOMAS: *The City Lady* (1697).

DOGGETT, THOMAS: *The Country-Wake* (1696).

DUFFETT, THOMAS: *The Empress of Morocco* (1674), *The Mock-Tempest* (1675).

FANE, SIR FRANCIS: *Love in the Dark* (1675).

GILDON, CHARLES: *The Roman Bride's Revenge* (1697), *Love's Victim* (1701).

GRANVILLE, GEORGE, LORD LANSDOWNE: *The She-Gallants* (1696), *Heroick Love* (1698), *The Jew of Venice* (1701), *The British Enchanters* (1706).

HIGDEN, HENRY: *The Wary Widdow* (1693).

HOPKINS, CHARLES: *The Neglected Virtue* (1696).

HOWARD, JAMES: *The English Mounsieur* (1674; acted 1666)

JEVON, THOMAS: *The Devil of a Wife* (1686).

LEANERD, JOHN: *The Country Innocence* (1677), *The Counterfeits* (1679).

MANLEY, MRS: *The Lost Lover* (1696), *Almyna* (1707)

MOTTEUX, PETER ANTHONY: *Love's a Jest* (1696), *The Novelty* (1697).

MOUNTFORT, WILLIAM: *The Life and Death of Doctor Faustus* (c. 1686; printed 1697).

PAYNE, NEVIL: *The Fatal Jealousie* (1673).

PIX, MRS MARY: *The Spanish Wives* (1696), *The Deceiver Deceived* (1698).

PORDAGE, SAMUEL: *Herod and Mariamne* (1673), *The Siege of Babylon* (1678).

PORTER, THOMAS: *The Villain* (1663), *The Carnival* (1664).

POWELL, GEORGE. Various operas, comedies, and tragedies.

RAWLINS, THOMAS: *Tom Essence* (1677), *Tunbridge-Wells* (1678).

RHODES, RICHARD: *Flora's Vagaries* (1670; acted 1663).

RYMER, THOMAS: *Edgar* (1678).

ST SERFE, SIR THOMAS: *Tarugo's Wiles* (1668).

SEDLEY, SIR CHARLES: *The Mulberry-Garden* (1668), *Antony and Cleopatra* (1677), *Bellamira* (1687).

SOUTHERNE, THOMAS: *The Loyal Brother* (1682), *The Disappointment* (1684), *Sir Anthony Love* (1691), *The Fatal Marriage* (1694), *Oroonoko* (1696).

TUKE, SIR SAMUEL: *The Adventures of Five Hours* (1663).

WILMOT, JOHN, EARL OF ROCHESTER: *Valentinian* (1685).

ANONYMOUS: *The Mall* (1674), *The Mistaken Husband* (1675), *The Muse of New-Market* (1680), *Wit for Money* (1691).

(iii) 1700–50

AUBERT, MRS: *Harlequin-Hydaspes* (1719).

BAKER, THOMAS: *The Humour of the Age* (1701), *Tunbridge-Walks* (1703).

BECKINGHAM, CHARLES: *Scipio Africanus* (1718).

BOADENS, CHARLES: *The Modish Couple* (1732).

BOYLE, CHARLES, EARL OF ORRERY: *As You Find It* (1703).

BROOKE, HENRY: *Gustavus Vasa* (1739).

BULLOCK, CHRISTOPHER: *Woman's Revenge* (1715), *The Cobler of Preston* (1716), *Woman is a Riddle* (1717).

BURNABY, CHARLES: *The Reform'd Wife* (1700), *The Ladies' Visiting-Day* (1701), *The Modish Husband* (1702), *Love Betray'd* (1703).

CAREY, HENRY: *The Dragon of Wantley* (1737).

CHETWOOD, WILLIAM RUFUS: *The Lover's Opera* (1729).

CIBBER, THEOPHILUS: *Patie and Peggie* (1730), *The Harlot's Progress* (1733).

COFFEY, CHARLES: *The Beggar's Wedding* (1729), *The Devil to Pay* (1731).

DALTON, DR JOHN: *Comus* (1738).

DENNIS, JOHN: *Iphigenia* (1700), *The Comical Gallant* (1702), *The Invader of his Country* (1720).

FENTON, ELIJAH: *Mariamne* (1723).

GARRICK, DAVID. Important for his farces and adaptations of Shakespeare.

HAVARD, WILLIAM: *Scanderbeg* (1733), *King Charles the First* (1737).

HILL, AARON: *The Fatal Vision* (1716), *Zara* (1736), *Alzira* (1736).

HIPPISLEY, JOHN: *Flora* (1729).

HOADLY, DR BENJAMIN: *The Suspicious Husband* (1747).

HUGHES, JOHN: *The Siege of Damascus* (1720).

JOHNSON, CHARLES. An exceedingly interesting writer who touched almost all the types of dramatic activity in his time.

MARTYN, BENJAMIN: *Timoleon* (1730).

MILLER, JAMES: *The Mother-in-Law* (1734), *The Man of Taste* (1735), *The Universal Passion* (1737).

NORRIS, HENRY: *The Royal Merchant* (1706)

POPPLE, WILLIAM: *The Lady's Revenge* (1734), *The Double Deceit* (1735).

SAVAGE, RICHARD: *Love in a Veil* (1719), *Sir Thomas Overbury* (1724).

SEWELL, GEORGE: *The Tragedy of Sir Walter Raleigh* (1719).

SMYTHE, JAMES MOORE: *The Rival Modes* (1727).

TAVERNER, WILLIAM: *The Artful Husband* (1717).

THURMOND, JOHN. Various pantomimes.

YOUNG, EDWARD: *Busiris* (1719), *The Revenge* (1721)

(iv) 1750–1800

BENTLEY, R.: *The Wishes* (1761), *Philodamus* (1767).

BRAND, MISS HANNAH: *Huniades* (1792).

BROOKE, MRS FRANCES: *Virginia* (1756).

BROWN, JOHN: *Barbarossa* (1755), *Athelstan* (1756).

BURGOYNE, GENERAL JOHN: *The Lord of the Manor* (1780), *The Heiress* (1786).

COBB, JOHN: *The Strangers at Home* (1786), *The Haunted Tower* (1789).

CRISP, SAMUEL: *Virginia* (1754).

FRANCKLIN, THOMAS: *The Earl of Warwick* (1766).

GLOVER, RICHARD: *Boadicia* (1753).

GRIFFITH, ELIZABETH: *The School for Rakes* (1769).

HAWKESWORTH, JOHN: *Edgar and Emmeline* (1761).

HOARE, PRINCE: *Indiscretion* (1800). Many translations from the German.

HOOLE, JOHN: *Cyrus* (1768), *Cleonice* (1775).

HULL, THOMAS: *Henry the Second* (1774).

JONES, HENRY: *The Earl of Essex* (1753).

KEMBLE, JOHN P. Important for his adaptations of Shakespeare.

KENRICK, WILLIAM: *Falstaff's Wedding* (1760).

MACNALLY, L.: *Fashionable Levities* (1785).

MALLET, DAVID: *Eurydice* (1731), *Mustapha* (1739), *Elvira* (1763).

MASON, W.: *Elfrida* (1752), *Caractacus* (1759).

MORE, HANNAH: *Percy* (1785), *The Fatal Falsehood* (1779).

O'KEEFFE, JOHN. Important for his musical comedies.

REED, JOSEPH: *The Register Office* (1761).

SHERIDAN, MRS FRANCES: *The Discovery* (1763).

TOWNLEY, JAMES: *High Life below Stairs* (1759).

VAUGHAN, T.: *Loves Vagaries* (acted 1776; printed 1791).

WHITEHEAD, WILLIAM: *The Roman Father* (1750), *Creusa* (1754).

(v) THE ROMANTIC PERIOD (1800 TO THE SEVENTIES AND EIGHTIES)

ARNOLD, S. J.: *The Shipwreck* (1796), *The Devil's Bridge* (acted 1812; printed 1820).

BERNARD, W. B.: *The Irish Attorney* (1840), *Louise* (1843).

BLANCHARD, E. L.: *Faith, Hope and Charity* (1845).

BROOKS, C. W. S.: *The Guardian Angel* (1849).

BROUGH, R. B.: *Kensington Gardens* (1851), *Alfred the Great* (1859).

BUCHANAN, R. W.: *Alone in London* (1885), *Sophia* (1886), *A Man's Shadow* (1889).

BUCKSTONE, J. B.: *Damon and Pithias* (1831), *The Flowers of the Forest* (1847).

BYRON, H. J.: *Uncle Dick's Darling* (1868), *Our Boys* (1875).

CRAVEN, H. T.: *Miriam's Crime* (1863), *Meg's Diversion* (1866).

FITZBALL, EDWARD. Many adaptations from Scott.

GROVER, H. M.: *Socrates* (1828).

HARWOOD, ISABELLA ("ROSS NEIL"): *Inez* (1871), *The King and the Angel* (1874).

JERROLD, D. W.: *Beau Nash* (1834). A prolific writer of comedies and farces.

MATTHEWS, C. J.: *Married for Money* (1855).

MERITT, PAUL: *Linked by Love* (1872).

MERIVALE, H. C.: *All for Her* (1875), *Florien* (1884).

MONCRIEFF, W. T. Many adaptations.

OXENFORD, JOHN: *The Dice of Death* (1835).

PHILLIPS, WATTS: *The Woman in Mauve* (1864).

SIMS, GEORGE R. Many farces and light comedies.

STEVENSON, R. L., and W. E. HENLEY: *Deacon Brodie*, *Beau Austin*, *Admiral Guinea* (1892).



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Dates of birth and death are inserted after the names of British dramatists not now living.

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